

Genscher: Cooperate with Soviets

SIEGEN (AP) — Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher urged Western allies Saturday to seek greater cooperation with the Soviet Union. He also praised recent proposals by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Speaking before members of his Free Democratic Party, Mr. Genscher said the West was presented with a unique opportunity to improve East-West relations. He also warned against letting mistrust of the Soviet Union destroy the chance for better relations with Moscow. "It would be a mistake of historic proportions if the West were to let this chance go by, only because it is unable to rid itself of the thought that we must assume the worst of the Soviet Union and its intentions," Mr. Genscher told delegates to a North Rhine-Westphalia state party congress. "We should not shrink back from our chance (to improve East-West relations) but make use of it," he added. Mr. Genscher said Mr. Gorbachev's recent proposed domestic reforms and proposals that the superpowers negotiate a pact to rid Europe of medium-range nuclear missiles were in the interests of the Western allies. "Gorbachev's policies are in the interest of the West, if they follow his recent pronouncements," Mr. Genscher said.

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Cabinet abolishes fee on non-Jordanian trucks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Saturday decided, during its regular session, to abolish a JD 75 exit fee on non-Jordanian owned refrigerator trucks leaving the country with loads of Jordanian agricultural products in a move to promote exports. During the session the Cabinet approved the establishment of a joint Jordanian-Egyptian investment company and also approved the Aqaba Regional Authority's budget for 1987.

Temperature to rise

AMMAN (J.T.) — The depression currently affecting Jordan is expected to subside gradually on Sunday with a rise in temperature, a spokesman for the Meteorology Department said Saturday. The spokesman said that a gradual increase of clouds of different levels was expected with a rise in temperature due to a warm front originating from Central Mediterranean.

Andreotti briefs Cossiga on coalition

ROME (R) — Prime Minister-designate Giulio Andreotti on Saturday briefed President Francesco Cossiga on the first round of his political consultations to try to form a new Italian government. Mr. Andreotti, 86, a Christian Democrat, has headed five previous governments and served as foreign minister under Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, who resigned on March 3. On Monday Mr. Andreotti begins a second round of consultations with political leaders on setting up another five-party coalition made up of Christian Democrats, Socialists, Republicans, Social-Democrats and Liberals.

5 timebombs explode in Tokyo

TOKYO (AP) — Timebombs exploded nearly simultaneously Saturday at the offices of five companies involved in the construction of Tokyo's Narita airport, police said. One person was slightly injured in the explosions, police said. Chukakuba, a radical group opposed to the airport construction, claimed responsibility for the bombings at a rally in Tokyo Saturday night. Kyodo News Service reported. Police said the explosions occurred between 3:15 a.m. and 3:30 a.m. in Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama and Ibaragi, all in the Tokyo area. Police suspect radicals opposed to the airport since the targeted firms are all involved in the second phase of construction of the airport, a police official said. Local farmers and their supporters have been resisting the government's expropriation of farmland to expand the airport.

12 killed in Philippines violence

MANILA (AP) — Communist rebels ambushed a military truck in the southern Philippines on Saturday, killing eight people and wounding six others, military officials said. In a separate incident in Bulacan province just outside Manila, soldiers fatally shot four suspected insurgents as they allegedly tried to escape after overpowering two officers during an interrogation, the military said.

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Rifai: Jordan is back on course towards development and progress

Balance of trade has improved by JD 35m • Gold and currency reserves stand at JD 822m • Liquidity has risen to 10.5 per cent • Deposits in commercial banks total JD 2,000m

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Zaid Rifai said Saturday that economic measures adopted by the government over the past year had begun to bear fruit and the country was now back on the right course towards further development and progress.

In a wide-ranging interview with the chief editors of the Al Ra'i and Al Dustour newspapers, Mr. Rifai said that the imports of the country fell to JD 850 million in 1986 from JD 1,072 million in the previous year and exports increased, thereby bringing about an improvement of about JD 35 million in the country's balance of trade.

Mr. Rifai said that the country's reserves of gold and foreign currency stood at JD 822 million, up from JD 781 million in the previous year; Jordanian expatriates transfers to the Kingdom increased from JD 402 million in

1985 to JD 415 million in 1986, and that liquidity increased inside the Kingdom from 6.6 per cent in 1985 to 10.5 per cent in 1986. According to the prime minister, the gross national product in Jordan, at fixed prices, increased from 3.2 per cent in 1985 to 3.7 per cent in 1986, the growth in commercial banks' deposits rose from nine per cent in 1985 to 11.5 per cent in 1986, credit facilities offered to the private sector in the country rose from 7.6 per cent in 1985 to 9.5 per cent in 1986 and that inflation dropped from three per cent in 1985 to zero in 1986. According to the prime minister,

the volume of trade at the Amman Financial Market rose significantly, and in the first two months of 1987 it registered an increase of 182 per cent over the 1986 average figure.

Following is the text of the interview:

Question: The government has worked out a new elections law. When does the government plan to put it into force, and does the government plan to dissolve Parliament to pave for a new election?

Answer: The new election law has not been suspended and it will be put into force once the mandate of the present Parliament is over and after a new election is held. The present mandate of Parliament ends by 16.1.1988 and the constitution provides for a new election in the four months that precede the date of the termination of this mandate; that is to say that a new election should be held



before the end of this year if the present mandate is not extended. The King is empowered by the constitution to extend the mandate for one or two extra years. If this does not happen then the election should be held before the end of 1987. It is true that the last election was held 20 years ago but by-elections were held over the past period and 18 people were elected representing the West

Bank and 11 new deputies were elected representing the East Bank. This means that there is a total of 29 new deputies, nearly half the House, now sitting in Parliament.

Q: Does the government plan to recommend an extension of this mandate?

A: It is premature to discuss this subject. As I said, unless the King extends Parliament's mandate then the election has to be held before the end of the year.

Q: Since Amman has been extended to include other municipalities, does the government plan to consider municipal elections within the whole of the Greater Amman area?

A: Of Course, the government plans to do that and there will be elections for the Amman city proper and for the other municipalities included within the Greater Amman region. As you know,

(Continued on page 3)

French hostage faces death threat ultimatum

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A French television technician held hostage in Lebanon was facing a death threat on Saturday after France dismissed a 48-hour ultimatum from his kidnappers.

The pro-Iranian Revolutionary Justice Organisation said it would "put on trial and execute" Jean-Louis Normandin unless French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac explained remarks by President Francois Mitterrand within 48 hours.

The group's hand-written statement, which contained no specific deadline, was delivered to an international news agency in Beirut at about 1200 GMT Thursday.

In Paris, Mr. Chirac's spokesman Denis Baudouin said Friday that France would "pursue the fight against terrorism, from wherever it comes and in whatever form it manifests itself."

Mr. Normandin, 35, was seized on March 8 last year with three other crewmen of the Antenne-2 television station after filming a rally of Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God) militants in southern Beirut. His three colleagues have since been freed.

Baudouin said the French government protested vigorously against the detention of Normandin and other French hostages, and held their captors responsible for their fate.

He said France still desired better relations with Iran and a senior French official reported progress in talks on repayment of

Kidnappers issue new statement

BEIRUT (R) — The underground Revolutionary Justice Organisation said Saturday it had declared war on France and a French hostage it held faced trial and execution within 48 hours. The handwritten statement, delivered to the independent An Nahar newspaper, said the pro-Iranian group had made the move after Paris dismissed a 48-hour ultimatum to explain remarks by President Francois Mitterrand. "Because Mitterrand's statements were not explained, we have declared war on France and put (Jean-Louis) Normandin on trial and will announce his execution within 48 hours," it said.

a long-standing Iranian loan.

The kidnappers' statement came with a colour photograph of Normandin, bearded and wearing a blue track suit and T-shirt.

The Revolutionary Justice Organisation issued no fresh word on his condition or whereabouts on Saturday.

"We have no special arrangements regarding the French hostage. We have no information on him," police chief Osman Osman said Saturday.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the United States appealed for the release of foreign hostages in Lebanon ahead of second anniversary on Monday of the capture of the longest held American Terry Anderson.

China to join arms talks after U.S.-Soviet accord

VIENNA (AP) — A high Chinese official was quoted Saturday as saying Peking may join international negotiations aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons provided the United States and the Soviet Union reach agreement first.

The official Bulgarian news agency BTA, in a dispatch from the capital of Sofia, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian made the statement Friday on arrival in Bulgaria from Poland for an official visit.

Mr. Wu, on a seven-nation European tour, met with his Bulgarian counterpart Peter Mladenov on Friday and discussed topics of international interest including the recent Soviet proposal to eliminate medium-range nuclear missiles from Europe, according to BTA, which is monitored in Vienna.

isation of international relations, BTA reported.

The news agency quoted Mr. Wu as saying that if the United States and the Soviet Union reached an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons, China, as a nuclear power, would be prepared to join international negotiations at a later stage to complete the removal of all such weapons.

Mr. Wu, who started his European tour in Czechoslovakia, was also scheduled to visit West Germany, Italy, San Marino and Switzerland.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's Feb. 28 proposal has raised hopes that Moscow and Washington could agree by the end of the year to scrap the European missiles and cut their numbers in Soviet Asia.

In another development, the United States has charged that the Soviet Union on numerous occasions over the past 10 years has released radioactive gas and debris into the atmosphere as a result of nuclear tests.



EVICTED FROM HOME: After living in Jerusalem's Arab quarter for over 50 years, the Karakle family (above) were evicted by Israeli police on Wednesday. Rashad Karakle, 33, head of the family, said the Israeli authorities took this action because all previous efforts by Jewish settlers to buy the house from him or harass the family out of the neighbourhood had failed. The Israeli justice ministry refused to comment to the Jerusalem Post regarding the case. At roughly 5:30 a.m. Wednesday, about 50 police and border police gathered in the area to evict Mr. Karakle, his wife Laila, his 75-year-old mother-in-law Mahadia and his six children. They were all driven outside, their furniture carted away and the door nailed shut. Mr. Karakle said his mother-in-law was taken by the Israeli authorities and he did not know where she is. Mr. Karakle vowed that he and his family will live in the street in protest. "We will sleep here," he said. "We have no other choice."

'U.S. and Israel had agreement not to spy'

TEL AVIV (AP) — A former Israeli foreign ministry official said Saturday the Pollard spy episode violated a formal agreement between Israel and the United States not to spy on each other.

Shlomo Avineri, a leading Israeli academic and former director-general of the foreign ministry, said that the agreement between the two allies had existed for several years.

Avineri's comments indicated a more official arrangement concerning espionage between the two countries than had previously been assumed to exist.

Until now, officials had referred only to an unspoken understanding between Israel and the United States that they would not engage in espionage activity against each other.

"There has been a formal understanding between the United States and Israel not to spy on one another," Avineri said in a telephone interview.

Avineri refused to elaborate on details of the agreement, including whether it was written form, saying only "it has been in existence for some years."

"The Pollard episode was in clear violation of that agreement," Avineri said.

Pollard, 32, a former U.S. navy intelligence analyst, was sentenced last week to life in prison for selling Israel classified U.S. military information. His wife, Anne Henderson-Pollard, 26, was given a five-year prison term for her role in the spy affair.

The Pollard episode has deeply strained relations between the two allies. Israeli analysts say they fear the affair may harm U.S. aid to the Jewish state, which now totals about \$3 billion, or U.S. intelligence cooperation.

American officials were particularly angered by the recent promotions of Aviem Sella, an air force official who recruited Pollard, and Rafael Eitan, a former intelligence officer.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres admitted Friday the government had erred in promoting Colonel Sella to head an important air force base and Eitan to head the state-owned Israel Chemicals Co. "We simply made a mistake," Peres said in an interview on Israel Television when asked about the promotions.

Syrians supervise relief supplies to Bourj Al Barajneh

BEIRUT (R) — Syrian officers supervised the entry of U.N. relief supplies into a beleaguered Palestinian refugee camp in southern Beirut on Saturday.

Eyewitnesses said two Syrian military observers stood at the edge of Bourj Al Barajneh with officials of the Shi'ite Amal militia as three U.N. trucks drove slowly along a muddy, shell-cratered road into the camp of at least 12,000.

Amal lifted a siege of Bourj Al Barajneh and its sister camp of Shatila on Feb. 18 after a four-and-a-half month war in Beirut and South Lebanon left some 850 people dead.

A spokeswoman for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said the trucks were loaded with 27 tonnes of food and 50 kilograms of medical supplies.

She said UNRWA handed an equivalent amount of food, donated by the World Food Programme, to Amal for Shi'ites living nearby — the condition for some previous deliveries to the camps.

Shi'ite Lebanese army troops stood by, but there was no sign of Amal fighters. Shi'ite forces have continued to restrict access to Bourj Al Barajneh and Shatila despite the presence of Syrian troops nearby.

Over 7,000 Syrian troops moved into west Beirut on Feb. 22, and stayed clear of the camps and adjacent Shi'ite areas.

This was the third UNRWA convoy to reach Bourj Al Barajneh since Amal announced the lifting of the siege. Two convoys organised by Iranian mediators and one by pro-Syrian Palestinians have also entered the camp since then.

The witnesses said UNRWA's assistant field health officer Ali Dakwar, who is a Palestinian doctor, accompanied the trucks to inspect damage to the camp's only medical facility.

Amal says it wants to stop Palestinians from regaining the strength they had before Israel's 1982 invasion.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which has accused Amal and Syria of seeking to drive refugees out of Lebanon, has urged the United Nations to take action to halt shelling of the shantytowns and relieve suffering there.

Washington welcomes Syrian role in Beirut but has doubts, page 2

'Geagea assassination plot' revealed

BEIRUT (R) — A would-be assassin said Saturday he had given himself up to Lebanon's main rightist militia after deciding to abort an alleged plan to kill its leader with a car bomb. Fuad Rabhani, 32, told a news conference organised by the mainly Christian "Lebanese Forces" militia that he was offered \$250,000 to plant a car bomb to kill its leader Samir Geagea. He said his orders were to park a car loaded with 80 kilograms of explosive on a route Dr. Geagea was expected to take earlier this week. "As soon as I knew who the target was... I decided to go along with the plan... to expose those behind it," he said. Mr. Rabhani, a civil engineer, accused Syria, former "Lebanese Forces" commander Elie Hobeika and ex-President Suleiman Franjeh's grandson Suleiman of being behind the alleged plot. He said he had given himself up with the booby-trapped car at a Lebanese Forces' checkpoint controlling access to the militia-run Christian enclave. Dr. Geagea, 35, is bitterly opposed to Syrian influence in Lebanon. He became "Lebanese Forces" leader in January 1986, ousting Mr. Hobeika two weeks after the latter signed a Syrian-backed peace pact for Lebanon with leftist militias.



KING ATTENDS EXERCISES: His Majesty King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, Saturday attends a military exercise conducted by an Armed Forces unit (above). The King was briefed on the stages and goals of the exercise. Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief General Sharif Zaid Ihu Shaker, Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Fathi Abu Taleh, the Shaker Forces inspector-general and a number of high-ranking army officers accompanied the King to the exercises. Earlier on Saturday, the King paid a visit to the Armed Forces General Headquarters (below). The King met with Gen. Sharif Zaid for sometime and issued directives.



Iraqi paper predicts major Iranian assault

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The Iraqi army newspaper Al Qadisiya said it expected Iran to launch a major offensive a week from Saturday to mark the end of the Iranian year.

The newspaper, in an editorial, promised the Iraqi people their armed forces would "defeat the aggressors on March 21, after which they (the Iranians) would be left with nothing to tell their own people."

Iran has threatened to launch a decisive offensive in the six-and-a-half-year war before the end of its calendar year on March 21. But Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi said recently this might be extended to the next 12 months.

Iranian forces are lodged on Iraqi territory, some of them only about 10 kilometres east of the southern port city of Basra, following a ground attack launched in January.

Diplomats in Baghdad and Tehran have said Iran has sent 200,000 troops massed near Basra. The Iraqi government has denied this, saying tens of thousands of Iranian troops are

facing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

U.S. 'warned Iran'

In another development, the American TV CBS said Friday that the United States had warned Iran not to fire newly installed missiles at ships in the Gulf.

The network's Pentagon correspondent said the Iranians had installed about a dozen surface-to-surface missiles in sites one U.S. intelligence officer said would allow them to shoot at passing tankers.

The report did not say if Washington planned any response if the missiles were fired. U.S. officials declined comment on the report.

Merchant vessels in the Gulf have frequently been targets in the war between Iran and Iraq. Iran's official IRNA news agency said Friday that Iranian naval forces intercepted and searched seven cargo ships and oil tankers for Iraq-bound goods in the Strait of Hormuz on the southern entrance of the Gulf.

Confusion prevails over death toll in ferry disaster

BRUSSELS (R) — Conflicting death tolls from last week's car ferry disaster caused confusion on Saturday with Belgian Transport Minister Herman de Croo saying the number of victims could be over 200 while the ship owners maintain the figure is 134.

Mr. De Croo said on Flemish Radio on Saturday he had obtained official figures from maritime authorities which said 45 people died and about 164 were missing after the British ferry Herald of Free Enterprise sank off the Belgian port of Zeebrugge last Friday.

The minister told parliament on Friday the number rescued from the wreck was only 349 and not 409 as reported.

Mr. De Croo said Saturday the discrepancy was due to the fact that children under four years old were not on the passenger list and other people may have boarded the ship unnoticed.

Some passengers who escaped had been counted twice in the confusion on Friday evening, boosting the rescued total, as emergency services fought to save more lives, he added.

owners Townsend Thoresen at Zeebrugge told Reuters by telephone the company stood by its figures of 409 survivors, 55 dead of which 49 had been identified and 79 people missing.

The ferry still lies on its side in 12 metres of water just outside Zeebrugge harbour where it heeled over after filling with water on its way to Dover in southeast England.

The Townsend Thoresen spokesman said Mr. De Croo was right in saying that children under four years of age were normally not registered on the passenger list.

But Townsend Thoresen based its figures on a head-count taken by its staff when people were entering rescue boats.

The spokesman said he could not rule out the possibility mentioned by Mr. De Croo that other people may have been taken onto the ship in secret by truck drivers.

But before issuing figures, the company had checked them very carefully and the huge gap in the number of people aboard given by the minister and the company was unlikely, he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Mohammad visits Prime Ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Saturday paid a visit to the Prime Ministry where he met with Prime Minister Zaid Rifai.

Rifai receives letter from Tunisian premier

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Zaid Rifai on Saturday received a letter from Tunisian Prime Minister Rashid Sfar dealing with ties between the two countries. The letter was handed to Mr. Rifai by Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan Said Ibn Mustafa during a meeting at the Prime Ministry.

Aid fund directors discuss financing

AMMAN (Petra) — Directors of the National Aid Fund offices in the Kingdom held a meeting on Saturday to discuss issues related to financing aid schemes, studies on cases and the social status of Jordanians applying for aid or rehabilitation training programmes. The meeting also reviewed legislation related to the formation of private committees for national assistance in accordance with an order issued by the fund's director general Mohammad Al Supqour.

Sudanese trade delegation due today

AMMAN (Petra) — An economic and trade delegation, headed by the undersecretary of the Sudanese Ministry of Trade and Supply are due in Amman today on a several-day official visit to Jordan. During their stay, the delegation and officials from the chambers of trade and industry will discuss means to strengthen and promote trade links between both countries.

Road accidents register increase

AMMAN (Petra) — Four people died and 140 others were injured as a result of 312 road accidents which occurred in the country over the past week, according to the Public Security Department (PSD). In a statement the PSD said that most of the accidents occurred in the Amman region. According to the statement, the number of accidents increased by 11.4 per cent over the previous week, the number of injured increased by 2.3 per cent, and the number of deaths decreased by 20 per cent.

Association to attend Arab engineers' talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Engineers Association will take part in the meetings of the higher council of the Federation of Arab Engineers which will open today in Sana'a, North Yemen. Jordanian Engineers Association President Ibrahim Abu Ayyash will head the delegation and he said that the council will discuss a number of issues related to supporting Arab engineers in the occupied Arab territories. The three-day meetings will also discuss a final report on the 17th Arab conference held in Amman last May as well as administrative issues.

Troupe to take part in folk festival

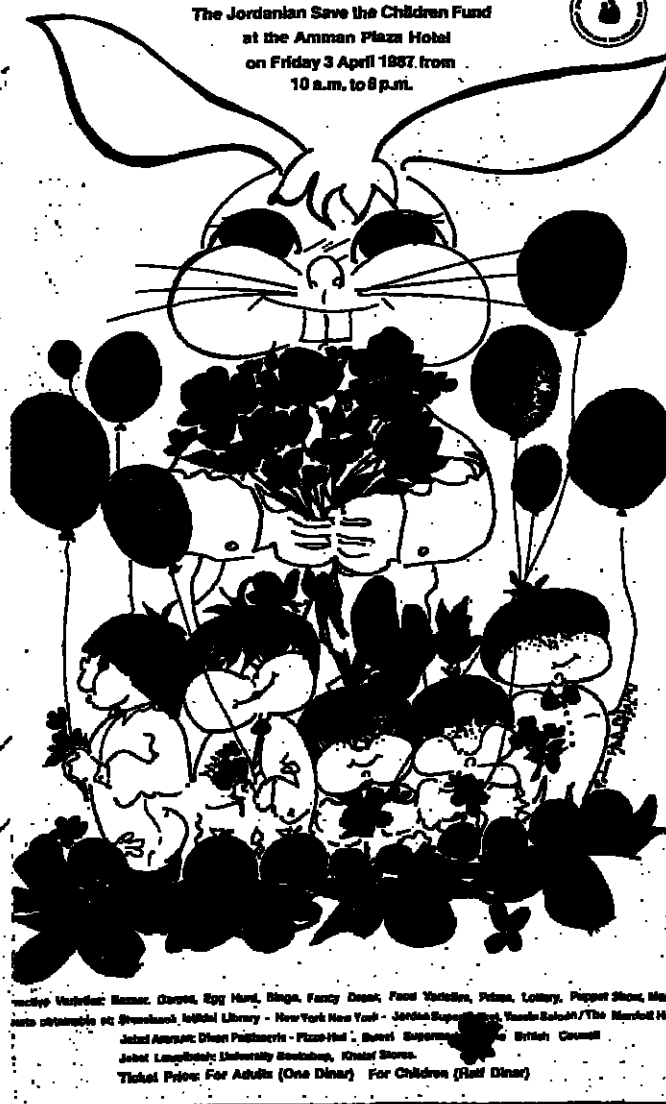
AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan national folklore troupe will take part in the second international festival of folklore art which is scheduled to be held in Norway on June 22. The troupe boycotted the first international festival due to the participation of Israeli troupes. The troupe's management said that it would only participate in this year's festival if no Israeli troupes took part in compliance with Arab boycott of Israel resolutions.

Jordan to attend Arab jurists' meeting in Baghdad next week

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Jurists Association (JJA) will take part in the Arab Jurists Association's 12th meeting due to open in Baghdad next Saturday. A JJA spokesman said that during the three-day meeting the participants will discuss issues of concern to the Arab nation and the subject of holding seminars to highlight the importance of the independent judiciary system, civil laws, and trade union liberties in the Arab World. Also on the agenda are financial and administrative issues and the election of a new secretary general for the federation who will serve for the coming two years. The JJA will be represented at the meeting by lawyer Jalal Abbasi, who is the JJA president, and Mr. Jalal Al Abbadi, the JJA's secretary.

Under the Patronage of HRH Princess Basma

1987 Spring Festival
Organized by
The Jordanian Save the Children Fund
at the Amman Plaza Hotel
on Friday 3 April 1987 from
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Jordan, Syria discuss operations of joint industry company

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Trade and Industry Rajai Muasher and his Syrian counterpart Ali Al Tarabulsi on Saturday reviewed the activities of the Jordanian Syrian Industry Company (JSIC) which is in charge of operating a number of economic projects in both countries.

Dr. Muasher and Mr. Tarabulsi, who arrived here Saturday on a two-day visit to Jordan, co-chaired the meeting of the general assembly of the JSIC, which also evaluated the present activities of the JD 20.5 million white cement company based in the south of Jordan and another scheme in Syria for manufacturing carpets.

According to the JSIC annual report, the white cement company, whose commercial operations started in August 1985 with a daily production output of 320 tonnes, has achieved an "excellent quality production registering two per cent higher than the British standard for cement quality."

The report added that production output during both the company's experimental and commercial operations reached 47,058 tonnes, out of which, 36,344 tonnes were marketed in Jordan and Syria. The company's operations were progressing very well and are covering the needs of both countries' markets, the report said.

Regarding the Syrian-based carpet company, the report noted that the concern had been set up in accordance with international specifications and that its operations are carried out "punctually."

The report also noted the feasibility of joint projects to be carried out by the two countries through the JSIC and stressed the necessity of expanding the company's participation base to accommodate other Arab countries.



Minister of Trade and Industry Rajai Muasher and his Syrian counterpart Ali Al Tarabulsi head the table and talks on projects being carried out by the joint industrial company (Petra photo)

Today's second round of discussions is expected to focus on the JSIC's present conditions and problems facing it, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra. In a statement Mr. Tarabulsi gave to Petra upon his arrival at Jordan's northern checkpoint of Ramtha, he said his visit is oriented towards discussing the development of the JSIC and solutions for some of the outstanding issues impeding the process of production by a number of affiliated companies. He did not elaborate any further on the nature of the problems as such, but sources close to the meetings said the issue of hard currency exchanges between Jordan and Syria were a major stumbling block in matters related to bilateral trade.

A senior Jordanian official, who earlier described the trade links between both countries as "good," said a lot remained to be completed on organising the exports and imports between the two states and finding means to finance them.

An agreement between the governments of Jordan and Syria for the pesticide company was endorsed by Parliament two months ago, despite objections raised by deputies Fou'ad Farraj and Abdullah Al Akaleh. Saturday's meeting also endorsed an agreement under which the Syrian-Jordanian Bank is to lend the two governments a total of JD 250,000.

Princess Basma reviews preparations for Save the Children spring festival

By Linna Nabil
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, president of the Jordanian Save the Children Fund (SCF), on Saturday visited Al Nuzha community centre where she met with wives of Arab and foreign ambassadors whose respective countries plan to take part in the SCF's 1987 spring festival, due to be held at the Amman Plaza Hotel on April 3.

Proceeds of the event will go to support activities run by the fund throughout the Kingdom. At the meeting, Princess Basma reviewed the various activities and programmes to be carried out during the festival and arrangements for different organisations taking part in the event.

To date, the embassies of 23 countries will take part in the spring display. They are the embassies of China, Indonesia, Italy, Greece, Pakistan, Kuwait, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Russia, India, Korea, Britain, Egypt, Canada, France, the Philippines, Austria, Belgium, Romania, Japan, Qatar, and the U.S. Other institutions to take part in the exhibition are the American Women of Amman, the Alia Gateway Hotel, the Jordan International Hotel, the House and Gardening Club and the Orthodox Club.

At the festival, there will be wings for selling gifts, food supplies, stationery, fancy dresses, children's toys, crafts and artificial flowers. In addition, there will be a number of puppet shows, and a special section where wives of the 23 ambassadors will sell gifts. The Jordanian Armed Forces Band will take part in the function and prizes and gifts will be distributed to children.

The Royal Jordanian Airline folklore troupe, the Haya Arts Centre, the band Mirage, the puppet theatre and the Al Ahliyyah and the Nazareth schools will also take part in the gathering.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday chairs a meeting at Al Nuzha community centre to review preparations for a spring festival for the benefit of Save the Children Fund activities in Jordan (Petra photo)

During the festival, Princess Basma said that one of the most important events will be a charity bazaar to display products of different centres run by the SCF in Jordan as well as food supplies, traditional handicrafts and national costumes. Princess Basma also reviewed the fund's activities and training programmes for women, including tailoring and embroidery courses, typing and secretarial schemes, as well as work related to puppetry, straw weaving, home economics, family education, nursing and first aid. Princess Basma voiced appreciation to the audience for their participation in the coming festival.

Later, she accompanied the wives of the various parts of the Nuzha community centre and where they were briefed on its services and activities. The SCF was founded in Jordan in 1974 and it carries out integrated health and social services and projects for mothers and children in various regions of the Kingdom. The SCF's first project was set up in Ma'an and caters for citizens in the town and in neighbouring villages.

Thought forum opens seminar on the Islamic awakening

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday patronised the opening of a three-day seminar on "the Islamic awakening and the problems of the Arab World," organised by the Arab Thought Forum (ATF).

In his opening speech, which was read out on his behalf by Minister of Higher Education Nassereddin Al Assad, Prince Hassan explained that the Islamic awakening was an answer to the political, social and economic problems that the Arab nation is facing. The Crown Prince defined a discussion of the Islamic awakening to be "a discussion of the conditions of the Muslims during a certain historical period and their intellectual and political school of thoughts and movements during the concerned period."

He said that one of the main objectives of the seminar was to try to explore the historical conditions which led to the modern Islamic awakening, to study its sources of origin, the stages of its development and finally to define the major Islamic movements and tendencies which champion the cause of the Islamic awakening. The Crown Prince, however, noted that there is a distinction between discussing the Islamic awakening and Islam per se. While Islam, in its main tenets and teachings, is constant the features and the forms of an Islamic awakening change from one historical period to another and are shaped and influenced by many political, social and economic factors, Prince Hassan continued.

"The main principles and tenets of Islam remain constant and unchangeable," he said, "while a discussion (of the Islamic awakening) is a discussion of a social phenomenon within a specific historical context or throughout the history of Islam," Prince Hassan said. The Crown Prince divided the seminar, for the purpose of discussion, into two parts: the first dealing with defining the Islamic awakening and the second outlining the problems of the Arab nation and influences on the shape of current Islamic movements.

He said that the Arab nation "is suffering from deep wounds due to political and internal divisions, cultural backwardness, external aggression, ... violation of their sacred shrines and attempts to impose foreign hegemony on the Arab peoples." "All these problems have led to the emergence of contradictory, often conflicting and confusing social, political, intellectual and economic movements and tendencies," he added.

"Thus it has become extremely relevant to realise and make a distinction between the authentic movements and those which are alien," he noted. Prince Hassan called for a combination and bond between the Islamic awakening and the Arab nationalist awakening. He pointed out with regret that many thinkers have separated and drawn

distinctions between the two movements and viewed them to contradict each other and consequently different, and sometimes even hostile, groups and parties worked against each other. He said that as a result of this separation, many of the emerging groups and parties on each side moved away from our authentic political thought and endorsed imported ideologies, which are alien to our heritage.

But the Crown Prince noted that, fortunately, there have been a number of Arab politicians and theorists who have tried to combine both awakenings in one movement.

During the first session, Dr. Yousef Al Qardawi presented a paper on the "general framework of the modern Islamic awakening" in which he outlined the main features of Islam as understood by the modern Islamic awakening.

According to Dr. Qardawi, Islam as understood by the modern Islamic movement focuses on the following aspects: to combine and strike a balance between fundamentalism, traditional ideals and modernisation, to achieve parity between the constant and changeable elements of the movement, to warn against intellectual stagnation and finally to seek to realise a comprehensive understanding of Islam.

During the second session on Saturday afternoon, Dr. Ahmad Sidki Dajani, a well-known Cairo-based Palestinian thinker, presented a research paper which explored foreign attempts to impose hegemony on the Arab and Islamic intellectual movements.

Dr. Dajani stressed the need for finding a clear definition for the Islamic awakening within its historical context.

Rifai: Jordan is back on course towards development and progress

(Continued from page 1)

the Greater Amman region came into being at the beginning of this year and work will be going on for the coming three-year provisional period to organise the area and I believe there will be nine municipalities within the Greater Amman region. But work should be completed on re-marking the boundaries of each municipality within the new organisation.

Q: With reference to parliamentary elections again, you said that 18 new deputies have been elected representing the West Bank but these were chosen by the House members themselves. Don't you believe that the wider base for election is on the West Bank where the people there should elect their representative?

A: Holding elections under Israeli occupation is out of question. But the constitution has provided for some sort of arrangement to make up for that and an amendment to the constitution stipulates that this can be done within the House as it has been done. When the election is held in the East Bank, the deputies representing the East Bank will, according to the amendment in the constitution, elect half of the representatives of the West Bank and the new elected group of West Bank deputies will in turn elect the last quarter.

Q: The government has been

increasing the volume of taxes and fees. According to what economists believe these are above the maximum level, and at the same time the government has been increasing travel taxes and cancelling allowances for travel and overtime work. Don't you think this is making it difficult for people in general and the employees in particular?

A: Taxes and fees imposed on the public are not as great as some imagine, and far less than those imposed by other countries. Travel fees and the allowances for overtime work and the fees imposed on domestic servants... all these should be regarded as part of the government's overall plans for improving the national economy. These measures should not be considered piecemeal because the government introduces such measures with the view of arriving at sound and fruitful results.

Let me explain with some detail. You will be surprised to know that there were 963,000 departures by Jordanians in 1986. This of course does not mean that 963,000 people left the country for visits abroad but many had made several trips. You could imagine how much these people spend abroad. Suppose each traveller spends JD 100 in each trip and this is a minimum, it would mean that JD 100 million or \$300 million in hard currency

are spent abroad every year. The government has raised the fees for travellers by air from JD 10 to JD 15 because this is expected to stem travel and save hard currency for the country and at the same time provide some sort of income for the government to help it carry out public services.

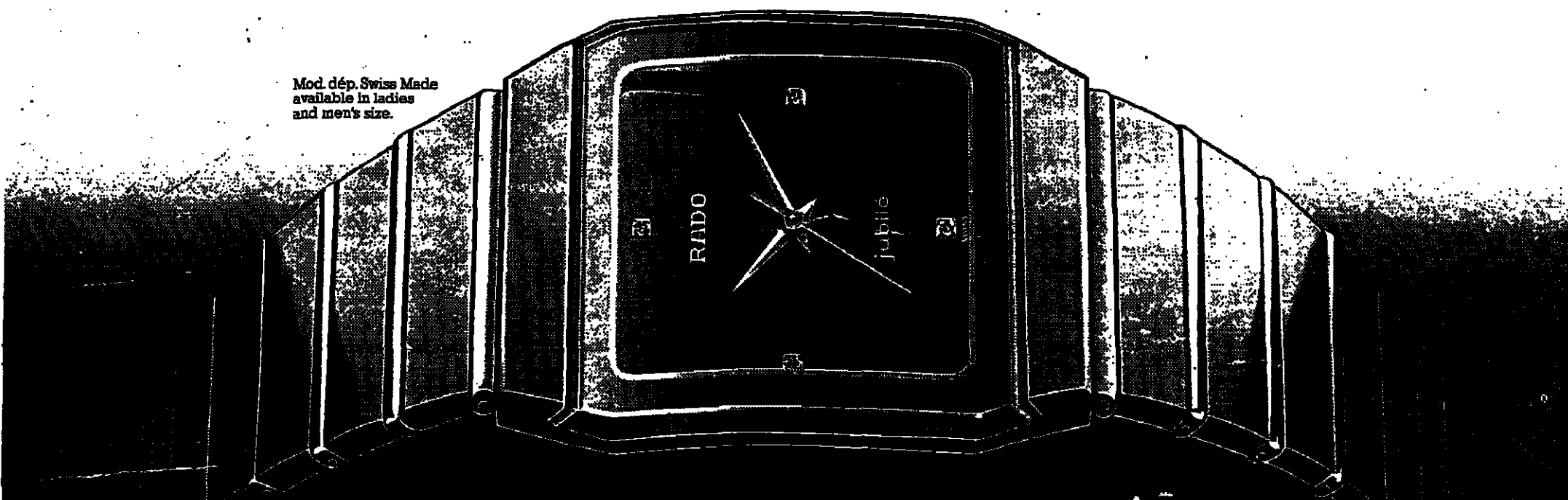
In addition, hard currency is hard to come by these days. Of course, the government needs the money and whatever income it gets to spend it on opening roads, building health centres, hospitals, on electricity and water projects and improving other services to the public. Therefore, those who can travel and spend extravagantly abroad can of course pay an additional JD 5 as a departure fee for the sake of serving the country and the general public.

The same measure applies to those employing domestic servants. I have lately acquainted myself with statistics and was surprised to see that we have at least 8,084 Filipino and Sri Lankan servants who annually transfer JD 10 million abroad. If we take into account the cost of keeping these servants in Jordan in terms of food, medication, and clothing etc... we can also add another JD 10 million. This is quite unreasonable at all and quite unjustifiable.

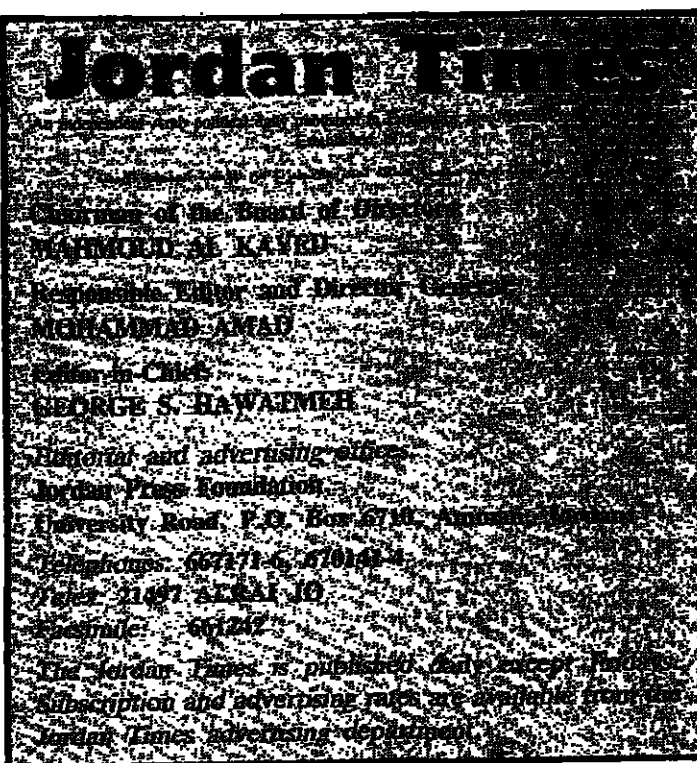
Of course there will always be isolated cases which can be treated separately in terms of fee (Continued on page 4)

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Refreshing clarity

THE prime minister, Mr. Zaid Rifai, in his wide-ranging interview with newspaper editors on Saturday, clearly set out in unambiguous terms the country's economic status and national priorities. Coming at a time when rumours and speculation are rife about the country's economy, the prime minister's clear and frank answers helped clear the mind of the citizens and set the record straight. On every issue that was raised — government spending, travel tax, the five-year plan, and increased fees on work permits for domestic servants — the prime minister's answers were clear, and pointed to one thing: our economy is not as bad as some portray it to be. He stressed that the recent government measures are aimed at paving the way for solving problems wherever they arise.

The prime minister also warned that it was time for Jordanians to accept the reality that we are not living in the past years of the oil boom in the Gulf and should work towards realigning our priorities and streamlining our economy. Towards this end, said Mr. Rifai, job-oriented education is a must. While agreeing that there are imbalances in the educational structure of the country, the prime minister also explained the work of the concerned councils towards bringing about a transformation in the system. He warned, however, that no immediate results could be expected because the strategy adopted in this regard was long-term.

All in all, it was refreshing to hear the prime minister explaining the situation in straight-forward terms, unclouded by obscure terminology. The situation is very real and it is high time we Jordanians realised the implications of the issues at hand and how we could help our country continue its march towards progress and development.

The revelations by Mr. Rifai of the soundness of our economy, our currency, and our balance of payments situation were reassuring and should give us confidence that concerted efforts by all of us should see us through to the aspired goals of our country.

Clearly, part of the responsibility lies with us in continuing the remarkable progress our country has made in the past years. We hope that everyone of us understands this and contributes towards further building our country and putting it back on track by cooperating in full with the government.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Hopes for summit

SAUDI Arabia and Algeria have both announced their agreement on the need for holding an Arab summit meeting, because of the significant issues that it would have to discuss. The last summit was held in 1982 and another was scheduled for 1984 but did not take place due to the on-going differences among Arab states which in turn had obstructed all initiatives to achieve solidarity and unity of ranks within the Arab World. A number of voices were raised over the past few years calling for the convening of the long delayed summit, regardless of who would attend, but this call was met with no response. But it seems that now the Arab leaders have found common ground warranting a meeting at the highest level, and it seems that Saudi Arabia has played a leading role in this endeavour. Saudi Arabia has been in touch with the leaders of various Arab countries in the past weeks following the Islamic summit which was held in Kuwait where Arab leaders had the chance to meet and discuss Arab issues. Perhaps the Arab leaders now realise the need for the summit meeting in order to coordinate their countries' stand vis-a-vis the common dangers and threats from the enemies of the Arab Nation. Jordan which has worked relentlessly for convening the summit is satisfied with the new development and sees in it a new chance for the Arabs to mobilise their efforts and confront all challenges and threats to their nation.

Al Dustour: A fresh call for summit

IT was natural for Saudi Arabia and Algeria to issue a call for an Arab summit conference which would see an end to all differences among Arab countries. A communiqué issued by the leaders of the two countries following King Fahd's visit to Algiers should be regarded as significant, specially as it reflects the views of two important leaders who carry real weight in Arab politics and who can actually play a key role in ending differences among Arab leaders. This call for an Arab summit comes just in time, as the Arab World continues to confront serious challenges and threats from the common enemies and in time to help the Arabs work out a new strategy that can effectively serve the interests of the Arab Nation. But first of all the Arab leaders are required to end their differences, and the summit provides the suitable forum where they can do so. There is no doubt that Jordan welcomes this development because it has sought to convene the summit by all means in order to re-establish solidarity among the Arabs. Jordan, more than others, believes in unified ranks and joint action that can help the Arabs secure their rights, and enlist worldwide support for their causes. We view the Algerian-Saudi Arabian endeavour as an important step to end the Arab disputes and a call on all Arab leaders to work seriously and relentlessly towards achieving Arab people's aspirations.

Sawt Al Shaab: A summit for the taking

THE Algerian-Saudi Arabian call for holding an Arab summit has added significance to such a summit and supported current efforts towards achieving it. Arab leaders now seem to be more and more convinced of the need to coordinate their attitudes and their policies with regard to important issues and problems that have been plaguing their nation. The summit, which the majority of Arab states want to convene, is not an objective by itself but a means for the Arab leaders to reach consensus on their future joint action. For this reason, the first step towards the summit should be an end of differences among Arab states because this is essential for a successful meeting and an effective result. We feel that work should be directed and efforts mobilised towards paving the road for the summit before holding it, and we need to have understanding among Arab heads of state before they actually meet in Riyadh to discuss a host of issues of concern to their peoples and their nation. Once this is achieved the Arab leaders can discuss the Gulf war, the Lebanese question and the Arab-Israeli conflict which are the main issues that have been troubling the Arab Nation.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Stop bleeding shareholding companies

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

IT has been widely held by policy makers that shareholding companies are "small governments" and thus are capable of meeting all their financial commitments at all times in addition to having plenty of funds to declare generous dividends.

Perhaps that is why Jordanian shareholding companies are required to pay up to 50 per cent of their profits as income tax, a rate well above the corresponding tax rates currently paid by corporations in the industrialised countries like the United States or Britain. Those countries have realised the importance of tax reduction for encouraging new investments, for expanding old ones and for creating new job opportunities. The marginal tax rates in those countries do not exceed 38 per cent, while the average tax rate is even lower due to various incentives and tax credits.

Like cigarettes and alcohols, whenever more funds are needed for the shareholding companies are the first source to be tapped. Companies would not be allowed to pay any dividends until after they pay 40 to 50 per cent of their profits as income tax, 10 per cent as compulsory reserves, 1 per cent for the universities, 2 per cent for research and development. Before making any profit they have to transfer 10 per cent of the salaries and wages to the Social Security Corporation, and very soon they will have to pay another 10 per cent of the salaries and wages to finance the medical insurance scheme. Let alone the remunerations of the board members and their inflated

transport allowances.

Currently, shareholding companies are passing through very tough circumstances. They are struggling for survival. Total losses sustained by shareholding companies in 1985, for instance, exceeded total profits. Therefore companies are no more an easy source to extract funds from. Companies themselves are starving for cash to keep their heads above the water.

Watching companies being sucked-off, one may conclude that this form of business is not wanted and should therefore be discouraged. The excessive burdens imposed on those companies seem only to serve to compel investors to abandon shareholding companies and concentrate instead on individual small businesses. So far such a policy has succeeded in halting the establishment of new shareholding companies.

However, the declared official policy runs counter to all the above. Officials encourage the establishment of new shareholding companies, which mean new investments, enlargement of productive capacity and the creation of new jobs for the tens of thousands of youths who are seeking employment in vain.

So far, shareholding companies are treated without mercy. They are looked upon as unexploitable gold mines. It is high time to re-examine this serious matter and remove the disincentives which

discourage the formation and success of companies.

The first step we recommend in this direction is to slash corporate marginal tax down to a maximum of 25 per cent. When a company is losing money, or making low profits, it should be exempted from financial burdens which are not directly related to its production effort, such as the 1 per cent university fees, the 2 per cent research and development suggested in the recommended draft of the companies law, medical insurance to staff, and the like, which should be left to the discretion of the management in the light of its financial situation.

Even if shareholding companies could act as a milking cow or a golden egg laying goose, it is not in the best interest of the economy to kill them and extract all the milk or all the golden eggs once and for all.

Correction:

In last week column a mistake was made in estimating the annual proceeds of the Social Security Corporation at JD 120 million and proceeds of municipalities in domestic revenues at JD 100 million. The two figures should in fact read JD 35 million and JD 30 million respectively. This makes the overall tax burden in Jordan around 33 per cent of national income which is still very excessive.

Rifai: Jordan is back on course towards development and progress

(Continued from page 3)

payment. Like the other day, I heard on the call-in radio programme a lady complaining that she was the sole bread winner of the family and keeps a servant who looks after her paralysed father. In this case the government is ready not only to charge the previous fee but to cancel the fee altogether because we are dealing with a humanitarian case here.

But on the other hand, some women complain by saying that they work in order to supplement the meagre income of the family, but I say that some of these women pay half or even three quarters of their salaries for keeping the servant who in turn transfers the money abroad. Does the remainder of the salary justify all this spending? There is a third category the wealthy people of Jordan whose women do not work outside home but are also complaining. What they have to pay is merely JD 7 a month extra — the cost of one handmaiding or a bouquet of flowers etc.

As to the issue of allowances for extra work and overtime, I am sorry that many did not understand the government's decision about it. It was meant to put an end to a procedure whereby some employees who were paid to do extra work in addition to what they normally do between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. did not actually do what they are required to do. They used to consider the extra pay as an extra income to improve their living condition without doing work in return. What the government meant by the new measure was to control the overtime work and so control the extra and unwarranted spending.

Q: What you said about the increased fees for domestic servants is a good measure, but people are questioning the wisdom of imposing fees on tourists upon their departure from the country. This measure could backfire on the country which is trying to attract tourists. How do you view the situation?

A: The government has been charging departure fees for visitors who could be businessmen or coming to see friends but it will not charge any fees on groups of tourists. A group means 15 persons coming to spend some time in Jordan and these are exempted. In addition, the government is re-considering previous decisions concerning the following categories and will issue new regulations in the coming future:

Jordanians leaving to work abroad, specially Arab Gulf region, who eventually will send back earnings to be invested in Jordan and those who come to Jordan from the Gulf to visit their families. All these will be treated differently from those travelling to Europe for pleasure.

Q: Does the government plan to impose fees on solar heaters? A: The government has never thought of such a thing. Indeed we thought of taking an extra measure to encourage people to use solar heaters because it will save energy.

Q: Some people who are used to keeping a domestic servant for necessary work would now opt to employ Arab servants but these will also transfer hard currency to their countries. What is your view about that?

A: The law requires the payment of JD 150 for non-Arab domestic servants but not for Arab servants, and if the situation requires that in the future the laws and regulations will be amended accordingly. But, for the time being, the existing law and regulations will be put into force.

The government heard some people complaining when the fees were raised for non-Arab servants, and had this been applied to Arab servants as well the complaints would have been greater, and greater still if the domestic servants were banned altogether.

Q: According to rules Jordanian universities should accept students in the light of their twijili average but the universities often do not follow the set rules. Do you not think this is violating the rules of Justice?

A: There are no exceptions but what the universities do is to assign a certain percentage of the seats for specific sectors like the children of Armed Forces personnel, those serving in the Ministry of Education, and those working at the universities, students from the occupied West Bank, students coming from Islamic countries and students from different provinces of the Kingdom, like the Badia and rural regions etc. This is done to give the chance to all categories and try to make it possible for less fortunate people to acquire higher education on the same level of others. In this case, we consider the measure justified.

Q: Our students abroad spend a lot of money, but if they are allowed to obtain education here they would save a lot of hard

currency for the country. Don't you think of expanding the university education base in Jordan to absorb more students?

A: We started off with one university. Then we opened Yarmouk University and then Mu'ta University and the University of Science and Technology. We also have 52 community colleges and allowed the private sector to establish a private university. But no-one has applied to open (an advanced) university today though the chance exists for such a project. The question is not to have more universities but rather whether we want all students to get university education. I agree that a lot is being spent abroad for teaching students at foreign universities and the country spends millions more annually on teaching students here. Our Jordanian society has a complex called university degree and many believe that their children should obtain such degrees. We are trying to reexamine this situation and the educational policy at large. We will give more emphasis on vocational and technical education.

Q: What has the ministerial committee on handling the unemployed people done, and what will the government do to link education with the needs of the community? A: We only have unemployment in certain specialisations and not a general unemployment problem. We have 40,000 unemployed (22,000 male and 18,000 female) citizens but at the same time we employ 120,000 non-Jordanians in different trades. Most of the unemployed are college graduates. We are now trying with all our might and without any exception to give all vacant jobs to Jordanians and we do not allow non-Jordanians to have priority over Jordanian citizens. However, we have certain types of occupations which are shunned by Jordanians though they are unemployed. This forces us to employ non-Jordanians. The non-Jordanian workers are here because no Jordanians want their place and for this reason Jordanians seeking employment remain idle. Hence we see that a university degree is no more lucrative and cannot serve as a means for income.

The committee which is handling the issue of unemployed people has held several meetings and issued several recommendations which are now under consideration before putting these recommendations into force. There are some short-, medium- and long-term recommendations and the government plans to offer training to graduates and then try to re-organise work with the intention of employing two persons to do the work of one.

Q: There have been some complaints about awarding projects to foreign firms. What is your view about this? A: We are in constant touch with the contractors union and we have been making it clear that we give priority in projects to Jordanian contractors. In some cases when we get financing from Arab and international funds, these sources insist that contacts be floated internationally and they do not want us to restrict projects to Jordanians alone. But we insist that a Jordanian firm should enter as a partner and that only Jordanian workers should be employed. Otherwise priority is always given to Jordanians.

Sometimes the government is forced to offer a tender to a foreign firm for reasons related to Jordan's exports to that country of that particular firm. For example, Jordan's phosphate exports to India, the largest importer of Jordanian phosphates, is estimated at \$150 million annually and we do not import anything from India in exchange. We only import \$2-million worth of goods annually and the Indian government complains about this unfavourable balance of trade between the two countries.

At the same time India receives offers from Morocco, Canada and the USA of phosphates at lower prices than ours and in exchange for importing Indian goods for the same amount. But India says that due to the unique relationship between Jordan and India and because Jordan is nearer to India it would like to see things going on smoothly and the relationship continuing but Jordan has to import more Indian goods. For this reason, we gave priority to an Indian firm to carry out two projects which will cost us only \$30 million when we are exporting \$150 million worth of phosphates to India. But there is no rivalry between local and foreign firms in any way.

Q: We notice that there has been a reduction of spending the implementation of the 1986-1990 five-year plan. What is the reason for that? Are all the funds for the plan available? A: There has been no drop on the part of the government in the

amounts of funds for the first year of the plan. There was some hesitation from the private sector which failed to invest sufficient funds in the first year of the plan for reasons connected with economic situations that have been prevailing in our region. As to the implementation of the whole plan, a continuous study is being made with the financiers, and we try to obtain loans to carry out projects, in addition to those projects directly financed by the Jordanian treasury.

Q: What was the result of your efforts in urging Kuwaiti investors to invest in Jordan and what was the response so far? Also, it is said that local banks have JD 2,000 million in deposit. What is the government's plan to encourage people to invest these funds in projects in order to stimulate the economy?

A: We have taken a number of measures to encourage foreign and Arab people to invest in Jordan and we have promised Arab investors that they would have the same treatment as Jordanians in this respect. We have also allowed investors total freedom to move their profits and their capital in and out of the country. I found a real desire from the Kuwaitis to invest in Jordan. They asked about the areas for investment and we provided them with the information about the projects. We agreed to organise a meeting in Kuwait next month to explain all about these projects which need capital and investment.

In Jordan, banks have deposits of nearly JD 2,000 million, part of which is being invested in buying government bonds for financing economic projects. We are trying to encourage people to invest in projects by creating profitable climates for their investments and giving people investment opportunities and removing all obstacles in the way of investments. Q: Why did not the government reduce prices of oil products and cement when their prices have dropped world-wide? A: When oil prices were high internationally the government used to subsidise oil products. The government paid JD 254 million in oil subsidy between 1976 and 1985 for the sake of keeping the price down for the public. The price of oil is fluctuating all the time; it might go up to \$25 a barrel and fall to \$15 the next day.

The government has thus resorted to other forms to help the public. It has reduced the price of fuel oil used in factories and the products are now costing less. It reduced the price of electricity and water to help the largest sector of the population. Q: Some people are apprehensive of the increasing amount of foreign debt. Can you assure us about that? A: Debts can be measured by the ability of each country to repay the loans and the interest on these loans and the service on those loans. The red line is reached if the government has to pay 20 per cent or more (of the exports) as interest and service annually on the total loans. In Jordan, we have reached 14.9 per cent only.

We have committed ourselves to paying our debts in instalments hoping to continue to get Arab financial aid as decided on at the Baghdad summit. But we did not receive all the commitments and so the government found itself forced to pay for the loans it obtained in the early 1980s. Now we are trying to keep the ceiling of our loans as low as possible and the amounts of loans are gradually dropping.

At present Jordan owes JD 902 million, some of which are easy loans, some are commercial loans and the rest are guaranteed by the government. We have to be careful about two things: first that the treasury should be in sound shape so that it can shoulder its duty towards dealing with other countries and the public in Jordan as well so that it can preserve its credibility.

The second point is to preserve an acceptable amount of foreign currency as a reserve for the Kingdom. This gives us stability and guarantees to meet our external commitments.

All the government's economic and financial measures should be viewed in this perspective. All measures that serve the country's interests are taken regardless of the reaction from the public. Q: What is the Kingdom's present foreign currency reserves? and to what extent does this affect the value of the dinar? A: I have heard rumours that the dinar is stronger than it is really worth and I do not know the motives or the sources of these rumours because they do not reflect the reality. Jordan had JD 781 million in gold reserve but this increased to JD 822 million in 1986. We achieved a saving in the balance of payment estimated at JD 35 million in 1986.

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Can an accountant who's never made a programme run the BBC?

By Edith M. Lederer
The Associated Press

LONDON — Plagued by controversy, accused of anti-government bias and facing an explosion of competition, the British Broadcasting Corp. has chosen a virtual unknown to be its director general.

When Michael Checkland beat five other candidates for the top broadcasting job in Britain, there was a scramble for information about him, and every newspaper printed the same three-year-old photograph — the only one in his files.

Checkland has never made a radio or television programme, instead, he rose through BBC ranks via the behind-the-scenes finance and management route. Even after being named deputy director to Alasdair Milne in 1983, he was little known outside the corporation.

Milne resigned in January, saying his decision was for personal reasons. But a British newspaper reported he resigned under pressure from the board of governors because of controversies that included two libel suits, police seizure of a segment on

Britain's first spy satellite and charges of anti-government bias in BBC reports on the U.S. attacks on Libya.

Checkland, named acting director, was so impressive during his four-week stint, the board of governors said, that he won the job over higher-profile rivals with impressive broadcasting credentials.

He takes charge of a publicly funded organisation of 25,400 employees with a budget of 933 million pounds (\$1.46 billion).

The BBC is one of Britain's major institutions, blanketing the land with commercial-free radio and television and beaming widely respected radio programmes abroad. But it is at a contentious period in its 65-year history.

Media observers reacted with caution and some dismay to Checkland's appointment of Feb. 26. The Times of London urged boldness, saying he must not revert to "his accountant's caution." Michael Leapman wrote in the London Daily News that choosing an accountant over senior broadcasters was "a safety-first choice that is sure to be reflected on our screens."

In his first news conference, the 51-year-old Checkland insisted that he is more than just an accountant, saying that for the past 10 years "I've been concerned with making programmes happen, getting the resources for them."

Right now, the BBC has only one major television rival and no national radio competition. But with a fledgling cable TV service already operating, satellite broadcasting on the horizon and the government recommending the creation of three national independent radio networks, he will face tough decisions about how — or whether — the BBC can meet the competition.

"The central task of the new director general is to take (the BBC) from a cozy and highly successful monopoly system, in which half the national audience has been handed to it on a plate, into a world of unregulated free market forces," said Nigel Ryan, another candidate for director general.

Checkland said he was ready for change.

"We have to keep the quality of programmes up in a period of

change. The BBC is not going to be in everything. We want to form a partnership with change, not oppose it," he said.

He gave more clues to his thinking in a speech to a conference on broadcasting eight days before his selection.

"Education, information and entertainment will drive the BBC on into the 21st century," he said. "We must be steady, confident and mean in using the massive resources still at our disposal, and bold and brave in choosing our priorities."

The new director general — nicknamed "Checkbook Checkland" — said Britain should be proud of the BBC. "Criticism by all means and regularly — we do so ourselves daily," he said.

But Checkland, apparently referring to the controversies that reportedly led to his predecessor's resignation, warned that "deliberate and sustained attacks day by day" would ultimately weaken the BBC. If weakened, he said, the innovation, risk-taking and investigative journalism would diminish and the country's democratic process would be poorer.



Michael Checkland: The DG with the vision of a leaner and fitter BBC

Woman sets off in solo bid to reach North Pole

By Betzi Woodman
Reuters

WARD HUNT ISLAND, Canada — A diminutive 40-year-old American, accompanied only by eight sledge dogs, has set out across the Arctic ice aiming to become the first woman to reach the North Pole by land.

Pam Flowers, a former medical worker who lives in Wasilla, Alaska, set out last weekend from this remote Canadian outpost on a journey that will last at least two months.

Flowers admits to being obsessed with her objective.

During the long trek her only contact with humans will be a daily radio conversation, if conditions permit, with base camp manager Kate Persons at Resolute, a weather station and far-north airport in Canada.

Flowers is also carrying a radio beacon which will keep her in regular contact with two polar orbiting satellites. This contact will help keep her on course, along with her traditional magnetic compass and sextant readings.

"I will know when I am there (the pole) because the beacon can pinpoint me within a few feet of my position on the ice. There's no way I can cheat," she said prior to her departure.

Flowers must complete her journey by mid-May at the latest because the 24-hour Arctic sun, which comes with the vernal equinox in mid-March, will make the ice too broken and mushy to traverse beyond that date.

The straight-line distance to the pole from her starting point is 765 kilometres, but Flowers expects she will travel at least 1,600 kilometres as she detours around open water and obstacles such as ice pressure ridges as high as 15 metres.

The polar ice can open up at any time, creating anything from a tiny crack to a fissure a 1.6 kilometre or more wide. If they are narrow enough, she can use her sledge as a bridge. If they are wider, she can make a pontoon bridge of ice slabs.

"Sometimes I will just wait," she said.

Flowers, who is 152 cm tall and weighs 43 kilograms, is using a light, flexible sledge based on an old Eskimo design.

The sledge is 4.25 metres long, 86 cm wide and has especially angled three-metre runners. It will not easily flip, which is important since she is travelling alone.

When loaded with gear and food, the sledge weighs about 2770 kilograms, which is more than Flowers can move over high ridges. The best way, she says, is to go around. Failing that, she will chop a passage through them or build platforms and ramps with slabs of ice.

Ice conditions alone will not

determine how far she goes in a day. The intense cold is another factor. Temperatures can get as low as minus 65 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 54 C) and, when accompanied by a 35 or 40 mile per hour wind, it becomes the equivalent of minus 150 degrees (minus 100 C).

The cold will affect all Flowers' activities, slowing the process of feeding and watering the dogs — which must be done four times a day — and tending her own needs.

Flowers will eat high-calorie foods — a half a pound of bacon a day with all fat absorbed by potatoes, sausage and logan bread, which is made with eggs, nuts, and fruits, each slice providing 450 calories.

Fresh-baked logan bread and other food supplies will be delivered by air at predetermined food drops scheduled for every 14 to 17 days as weather permits.

Dehydration is a constant worry for both Flowers and her dogs. The snow contains little moisture, and gathering and melting it takes hours.

The dogs, with a higher metabolism than humans, can gulp snow without harm to assuage their thirst. Flowers carries tea or liquid Jello for herself in a special bag to keep it from freezing.

The dogs, Siberian Huskies, are insured for sleeping in the open on burlap bags. The sledge carries with it gear booties made of burlap with velcro fasteners to put on the dogs' feet when the ice is sharp.

With approval from the widow of Naom Uemura, who made the first and so far only solo surface trek to the North Pole, Flowers is dedicating her trip as a memorial to the Japanese adventurer, who died in 1984 climbing alone on 6,166-metre Mt. McKinley in Alaska.

It was an article by Uemura, also a person of small stature, which fired Flowers' desire to leave her life of "collecting fine furniture and become an apprentice to the Arctic."

She quit her job as a respiratory therapist, sold her belongings, and began training for the odyssey. She headed north and in the past eight years has racked up more than 22,500 kilometres of winter sledge-dog trips, most of them alone. These include last year finishing the Iditarod, the gruelling 1,770 kilometre sledge-dog race across Alaska from Anchorage to Nome.

She says the first thing she plans to do when she gets home will be to "shower, eat a box of bon-bons and buff my nails."

Then she'll get busy writing up the experiments and scientific readings taken on the trip and begin a book about the adventure. After that, she plans to start raising money for her next solo expedition — to the South Pole.

A softer Rambo may even start thinking

By Ronald Clarke
Reuters

LOS ANGELES — Rambo may be getting soft, Sylvester Stallone is changing the script to make the character who launched a one-man invasion of Vietnam more realistic and less of a cartoon.

"Sly is afraid the public will not buy the Rambo they know one more time," an aide to Stallone said. "He is going to bring Rambo more into the real world, give him more depth, maybe even make him start thinking about world issues instead of blasting everything that moves."

One important reason for the change is the film "Platoon," a stark, realistic infantryman's view of the Vietnam war which received eight Oscar nominations and is topping the U.S. box office takings.

Stallone believes this is a sign that audiences, particularly American audiences, want more realism in their films.

Stallone's latest film, "Over the Top," the saga of a muscle-bound truck driver who goes in for arm wrestling, is in only fourth place in the U.S. box office ratings, a relative failure for the world's top box office draw.

In addition to "Platoon," the unheralded "mannequin," starring comparative unknowns Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattrall, and "Outrageous Fortune"

starring Bette Midler are also ahead of Stallone in the box office race.

"Mannequin" is showing in less than a thousand theatres, compared with 1,800 showing Stallone.

The story of a man who falls in love with a bewitched shop dummy, "Mannequin" cost only \$5 million to make, whereas "Over the Top" cost \$25 million.

Stallone, estimated by United Artists studio executive Lee Rich to have grossed more than one billion dollars at the box office, has usually had an opening weekend box office of more than \$15 million.

But "Over the Top" took \$5.1 million on its opening holiday weekend.

Ten years after Stallone's first movie, "Rocky," won an Oscar for best picture, film experts are wondering whether Stallone is going to have to change his image to end a style of acting described as shoot now, mumble later.

In "Rambo: First Blood Part II," Stallone had only 163 lines, less than two a minute.

He fought "for the American way of life as boxer Rocky Balboa in the 'Rocky' series, rescued American prisoners from Vietnam in the 'Rambo' series and, as cop Marion 'Cobra' Cobretti, wiped out crazed killers whom the rest of the police force wanted to leave alone in 'Cobra'."

In "Rambo," Stallone favoured poison arrows or bowie knives when he did not have a gun handy. The film received a million dollars worth of free publicity when President Reagan, in a microphone test heard by reporters when he was preparing for a speech on the release of 59 American hijack victims in Beirut, declared: "Boy, after seeing 'Rambo' last night, I know what to do next time."

In "Cobra," Stallone poured petrol over a victim after telling him: "You have the right to remain silent."

It has been a heady journey for the man born in the tough hell's kitchen area of New York, who cleaned out lion's cages and worked as a cinema usher for six years while looking for acting jobs.

To the recorded sound of a trumpet fanfare, Stallone announced at a news conference last May that he had signed a multi-million dollar agreement with United Artists to make 10 films in the next six years and to star in at least five.

"They will all be in a very energetic role," Stallone said then.

But some film analysts say the time may be coming when Stallone will be able to make the film that has been a lifelong ambition: The story of the brooding poet and author Edgar Allan Poe.

Theft critical problem for archaeologists

By Carl Manning
The Associated Press

BELIZE CITY, Belize — The beaded jade necklace glistens in the sunlight as a middle-aged Belizean holds it up for inspection by a visitor who casually expressed an interest in ancient Maya artifacts.

"Now, if I was in the business of selling, I might be able to get \$2,500 for it," the man says. "Maybe for you, it would be no more than \$1,500."

In the United States, he says, it might sell for up to \$10,000 at a major auction house.

The man never says the piece is for sale, nor whether it is a genuine Maya creation. He will say, however, it was found in a cave.

That, plus its appearance, its estimated value and the man's reluctance to have his name revealed all suggest it is real, available and looted.

For selling any looted Maya artifact, the man could be fined \$5,000 and imprisoned up to five years by the government of this small Central American nation, where every artifact is crucial to recreating the history and decline of the mysterious civilisation.

"The problem of looting has increased tenfold in the past five years. There is no way to say just how much has been taken out of the country," archaeology commissioner Harriot Topsey said in

an interview at Belmopan, the capital built in the middle of the jungle about 50 miles west of Belize City.

"Sometimes it is sold on the open market, which adds an air of legality to a very illegal business," he said.

More than 600 Maya sites have been found in Belize, Topsey said. He believes there could be 600 more awaiting discovery under the green jungle canopy that covers much of the country, which is nestled into the Caribbean coastline between Mexico and Guatemala.

Many of the stolen artifacts are from the Mayas' classic period, A.D. 300-900, but the oldest Maya sites in Belize date back to 2500 B.C.

For maximum research value, the sites must be found intact, Topsey said. A bowl made in the pre-classic area, if found in a classic-period village, for example, might change scientists' ideas about when the village was settled.

"An object taken from its original location is out of context, and then you lose whatever information that might have been gotten," Topsey said. Furthermore, "many looters destroy what is at the site to get at the items that can be sold."

Most of the stolen objects go to collectors in the United States, Topsey said. Belize, a nation 174 miles long and 68 miles wide with

a population 162,000, simply does not have enough police to curb the thefts, he said.

"If you had the whole police force, you still couldn't stop it because you need other countries like the United States working to stop it," Topsey said. "Only by international cooperation can you stop it."

Small artifacts such as pots and figures that fit into suitcases and pockets are hardest to protect, although some looters resort to bizarre methods of trying to spirit the items out of the country.

One would-be smuggler cut up a stela — a stone column covered with Maya glyphs — and tried to carry it out of the country in 11 suitcases, said Winnel Branche, another government archaeologist.

"It was all the weight that gave it away. It was a pretty ridiculous thing to try to do," Ms. Branche said.

Sometimes looters become victims. In early February two Guatemalan men died in a remote area of northern Belize when a section of Maya mound they were looting collapsed, a coroner's report said.

Objects from the classic period are often found in the caves that dot Belize, Ms. Branche said. The Mayas considered the caves gateways to the underworld, and placed bowls of food in them as offerings to the gods, she said.

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Watford shatters Arsenal's dream of 3 English titles

LONDON (AP) — Arsenal's dream of winning all three English soccer titles was shattered Saturday when it was beaten 3-1 at home by Watford in the quarterfinal of the F.A. (Football Association) Cup.

Meanwhile, the two Merseyside clubs, Liverpool and Everton, moved further away from their north London rival in the league by winning their games. Champion and standings leader Liverpool won 3-1 at Oxford United while second-placed Everton beat Southampton 3-0 at home.

The results meant Liverpool maintained its six-point lead over Everton and moved ten points clear of third placed Arsenal, which has two games in hand.

In another cup game, Coventry City gained the semifinal for the first time in its history by winning 3-1 at Sheffield Wednesday.

Arsenal's sixth round game against Watford ended in controversy and unruly scenes on and off the field.

The home side, which will meet Liverpool in the final of the Littlewoods Cup at Wembley next month, took the lead through Ian Allison.

But the visitor roared back with goals by England international Luther Blissett and John Barnes, before Blissett scored a controversial third in the last minute.

The linesman's flag went up

with the ball in the Watford area and play continued with Arsenal fans shouting for a penalty. It could have given their side an equaliser but, instead, Blissett took the ball to the other end and scored Watford's third.

The Arsenal players drew the referee's attention to the linesman, but after the two officials consulted, referee Brian Stevens awarded the goal.

Amid angry scenes after the final whistle, one linesman was seen to be ducking to avoid missiles thrown from the stands and Arsenal's England international midfielder, Steve Williams, was involved in a heated exchange with Watford's manager, Graham Taylor.

At Sheffield, Coventry took the lead through Cyril Regis only for Gary Megson to level soon after half time. But the visitor clinched a semifinal place with two strikes by Keith Houchen.

Two more quarterfinals ties take place on Sunday. Wimbledon hosts Tottenham Hotspur while Third Division Wigan Athletic receives Second Division Leeds United.

Wigan claims Gorbachev as fan

WIGAN, England (AP) — English Third Division club Watford said Saturday it was counting on the support of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev when it takes on Leeds United in an F.A. (Football Association) Cup quarterfinal on Sunday.

Wigan's general manager, John Fillingham, said he expected Gorbachev to sit by his radio wearing his Wigan hat and scarf cheering on the little north English club in its bid to reach a Wembley final for the first time in its history.

Fillingham said the club understood the Soviet leader took a keen interest in its fortunes.

"News of Mr. Gorbachev's passion for our club was leaked in the Bangkok Post in January, so we sent him a complete set of our supporters' kit. Everybody knows the reason the Soviets stopped jamming the (British Broadcasting Corporation's) world service was so Mr. Gorbachev could follow the football league results, and in particular Wigan's performance," Fillingham said.

Davis Cup roundup

Australia splits singles with Yugoslavia

NEW YORK (AP) — Defending Davis Cup champion Australia, playing on a grass court in Adelaide, split its first-round World Group singles against Yugoslavia. Pat Cash of Australia downed Bruno Oresar 9-7, 6-4, 7-5 and Yugoslavia's Slobodan Zivojinovich stopped Wally Masur 6-8, 8-6, 9-7, 12-10.

Sweden, which has reached the final the last four years, winning in 1984 and 1985, also split its two singles with Italy. Sweden's Mats Wilander swept Simone Colombo 6-2, 6-3, 6-0 after Italy had won the first singles Friday when Paolo Cane surprised Mikael Pernfors 1-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4. The best-of-five match competition is being played in Prato, Italy.

Israel gained a stunning 2-0 lead over Czechoslovakia after Miloslav Mecir went down in four sets to Amos Mansdorf and injury forced Milan Srejber to retire in the fifth set against Shlomo Glickstein.

A nervous Mecir showed none of the form which propelled him to victory over the world's top-ranked player, Ivan Lendl, in the International Players Championships at Key Biscayne, Florida last Sunday. A confident

Mansdorf won 6-4, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3. In other World Group matches Friday, it was Argentina 1, India 1; West Germany 1, Spain 0; France 2, South Korea 0; Mexico 2, Britain 0, and Chile 1, Commonwealth Caribbean 1.

Wimbledon champion Boris Becker gave West Germany its first point as he outlasted Emilio Sanchez of Spain 6-4, 7-5, 5-7, 3-6, 6-3. The second singles match, between Eric Jelen and Spain's Sergio Casal, was halted by darkness with Casal leading 6-4, 7-5, 5-7, 3-6.

In New Delhi, India, veteran Vijay Amritraj lifted India into its tie with Argentina, downing Horacio De La Pena 9-7, 6-3, 6-3 after Argentina's Martin Jaité defeated India's Ramesh Krishnan 1-6, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Although France won both of its first-day singles matches in Marq-En-Baroeul, France, neither one came easily. Guy Forget stopped Jin Sun-Yoo 6-3, 5-7, 6-3, 6-3 and Thierry Tulasne needed more than two hours to defeat Bong Soo-Kim 6-4, 6-2, 6-3.

France's top two players — Yannick Noah and Henri Leconte — are sidelined with

injuries, although Noah may play in the doubles.

There were numerous zonal matches played Friday. The zonal winners will advance to the World Group in 1988.

In the Eastern Zone first round, the Philippines took a 2-0 lead over Sri Lanka, Hong Kong won both its singles matches against Malaysia, Pakistan jumped out to a 2-0 advantage over Bangladesh and Indonesia and China split its two first-day singles matches.

In a second round African Zone battle, Zimbabwe took a surprising 2-0 lead over favoured Kenya.

At Nassau, Bahamas, in a first-round American Zone match Bahamas' Ricardo Acuna whipped Douglas Burke of Jamaica 6-3, 6-3, 9-7 to give his country a tie with the Commonwealth Caribbean team. Earlier, Bahamian Roger Smith outlasted Chile's Robinson Ureta 12-10, 7-5, 2-6, 7-5 to give the Commonwealth Caribbean the first point.

Mexico moved within a victory of eliminating Britain with Francisco Maciel beating Jeremy Bates 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 and Leonardo Lavalle taking Andrew Castle 6-2, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, at Mexico City.

Soviets win gold medal in ice dancing competition

CINCINNATI, Ohio (R) — Natalia Bestemanova and Andrei Bukin of the Soviet Union, skating like Broadway dancers, won their third consecutive gold medals at the World Figure Skating Championships.

For the third year in a row Marina Klimova and Sergei Ponomarenko were runners-up to their teammates.

Canadians Tracy Wilson and Robert McCall repeated as bronze medalists, but with a stronger performance this year. Six of the nine judges gave

Bestemanova and Bukin perfect scores of 6.0 for artistic impression. They received four 5.9s and the rest 5.8s for technical merit. Skaters from the Soviet Union also won the gold and silver medals in the pairs competition.

Bestemanova and Bukin's strong victory Friday night left them the favourites to win the gold medal in ice dancing at the 1988 Olympics.

The gold medalists finished the three events in the ice dancing competition with 2.4 points.

Lloyd-Turnbull advance to doubles final

MARCO ISLAND, Florida (R) — Chris Evert Lloyd and Australian Wendy Turnbull survived two tiebreakers to advance to the finals of the \$400,000 Women's Team Tennis Championship doubles tournament.

The second-seeded team of Lloyd and Turnbull struggled to a 7-6, 7-6 semifinal win over unseeded American Betsy Nagelsen and Robin White.

Also advancing to the final were the unseeded team of American Lori McNeil and Bettina Bunge of West Germany.

U.S. edges England in athletics meet

COSFORD, England (AP) — The United States, sparked by a national-record performance by the 1,600-metre relay team, edged England in the sixth annual Kodak Classic indoor track and field meet, where two-time Olympic champion Sebastian Coe said he probably would not compete in the 1988 Games.

Clarence Daniel set a meet record in the 400 and ran the first leg of the U.S. relay quartet, which was clocked in 3 minutes, 6.01 seconds, .02 seconds faster than the U.S. mark set by the University of Southern California in 1980 and .11 slower than the world indoor best of 3:05.90, set by the Soviet Union in 1970.

In a meet full of second and third-string athletes, the biggest cheers went to the biggest home-team names. And one of them, Coe, made big news.

Coe, the two-time Olympic 1,500-metre champion from England, took the 3,000 metres at 7:54.33, in his only appearance of the indoor season and received a standing ovation from the capacity crowd of 4,000 at Cosford Royal Air Force Base.

Afterward, he said lapses in training this year had cost him

valuable conditioning and that, plus a desire to get away from the 800 and 1,500 he has run in previous games, probably had ended his Olympic career.

"I'm 99 per cent not to go" to the Seoul Games, Coe said. "It's mostly because I don't particularly want to. I want to concentrate on 5,000 metres."

In an invitational race that did not count in the standings, Britain's Kirsty Wade set a Commonwealth record in the women's 2,000, at 5:45.81 seconds. And Merlene Ottey-Page of Jamaica stumbled in the final stretch but still set an England all-comers record of 23.21 in the women's 200 invitational.

The Americans took the team championship by 75 1-2 to 73 1-2, starting fast and enduring a mid-meet surge by the home team. They lead the series 4-2.

Daniel led from start to finish to successfully defend his title in the 400, the first track event of the evening, with a time of 46.47 seconds, .05 faster than the mark he set a year ago.

The United States lead swelled with victories in the 60 hurdles by Albert Lane in 7.82 and Olympic bronze medalist Thomas Jeffer-

son in the 200 at 21.35.

Jefferson had a shot at a double victory as he defended his 60-metre crown, but England's Ernest Obeng shot out of the blocks and led all the way to win in 6.72, with Jefferson second in 6.78.

That followed Coe's victory in the 3,000, just .01 slower than the meet record and personal best the English star set a year ago.

Brian Ashurst of the United States was second in 7:55.49 and Brian Diemar, a bronze medalist in the 1984 Olympic steeplechase, was third in 7:56.81.

Coe, who missed scheduled indoor appearances earlier in the season because of the flu, jetted into the lead on the first turn of the final lap, blazing the final 200 metres in 27.27. With a half-lap to go, he turned his head to make sure no one was gaining on him.

The tide continued to run the English way in the 1,000, as Tony Morrell beat teammate Peter Elliott by five yards to win in 2:22.31.

But in the 800, Randy Moore of the United States held off a strong charge from England's Andrew Myatt to win by three yards in 1:50.25.

France's Fignon wins 5th stage of Paris-Nice race

ST. TROPEZ, France (AP) — France's Laurent Fignon won the fifth stage of Paris-Nice cycling race but Ireland's Stephen Roche retook the overall lead heading into the final two days.

Fignon won the 208-kilometre (130-mile) stage between Toulon and the French Riviera resort of St. Tropez in 5 hours, 3 minutes, 54 seconds and received a 10-second bonus.

Ireland's Sean Kelly, seeking his sixth straight Paris-Nice victory, was second, seven seconds behind. A pair of Frenchmen, Eric Boyer and Roman Pensec were next with Roche close behind, all in the same time as Kelly.

Roche moved into the overall lead with an advantage of 24 seconds over Kelly. France's Jean-Francois Bernard, who was first after the fourth stage, finished more than two minutes behind.

The Irishman made a break early in the race and built up a two-minute lead. He was joined by a group of five others. Fignon made his move in the last mountain pass about 23 kilometres from the finish. He was able to win comfortably over Kelly.

The next stage is a 163-kilometre (100-mile) section to Mandelieu. The race ends Sunday with a stage to Nice and a time-trial up a mountain to the village of Eze.

Italy's Nati takes vacant European title

FORLI, Italy (R) — Italy's Valerio Nati took the vacant European featherweight crown after the referee stopped his fight against France's Marc Amand in the second round of a scheduled 12-round contest.

The fight started fast and furiously with both boxers landing hard punches and Amand displaying a threateningly long reach.

But in the second round a left-hander from the 30-year-old Italian opened up a gaping cut under Amand's right eyebrow. The referee called in the ring doctor who judged the cut too serious for the bout to continue.

Nati, the "Tiger of Forli," was making his 11th European appearance in front of a noisy hometown crowd.

The European Boxing Union named Nati and Amand to fight for the title after it was left vacant in January by Jim McDonnell.

By Charles J. Hanley
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Just 18 months before the Olympic torch is lit in Seoul, South Korea's rival political factions are entering the final, critical rounds in a world-class bout of brinkmanship.

The outcome of the match-up between the military-dominated government and the main opposition party will set the mood for the 1988 Seoul Summer Games — and set South Korea's political course for years to come.

Some in the opposition talk ominously of Olympic disaster next year if the generals this year deny them the kind of permanent democracy they want.

"The Olympic Games would not be possible," one well-placed member of the opposition New Korea Democratic Party asserted in an interview. "The people of Korea would disavow the Olympics."

Knowledgeable observers are skeptical. Korean pride in staging the sports extravaganza would overwhelm any attempt at a boycott by the political opposition, they say.

But the U.S. embassy, always influential here, is nonetheless pressing both President Chun Doo-Hwan and his rivals to reach a compromise soon, to end decades of authoritarian rule and take the tension out of the Olympic countdown.

One proposal the Americans view favourably: establishing an interim, "reconciliation" government of all parties to guide this U.S.-allied nation of 41 million people through next year's nervous days in the camera eye of the world.

If Seoul's political plans are shaky, its Olympic preparations are solid. South Korea's ruling generals have taken on the task like a military campaign.

Across the half-mile-wide Han



Main venue for Olympics: Seoul Sports Complex

River from central Seoul, on flatlands where silk worm plantations once flourished, a landscaped collection of stadiums and gymnasiums has taken shape. Only indoor swimming pool and housing for Olympic athletes and the visiting press remain uncompleted.

An eight-lane Olympic expressway has been laid down along the Han's southern banks. Seoul's new subway system has been extended. Some fire-roofed slums, considered eyesores, have been demolished.

In their eagerness not to offend Olympic tourists, the authorities have even ordered restaurants serving "health stew" — a traditional Korean favourite otherwise known as dogmeat — to move to premises away from main streets.

And, as usual in this heavily policed state, the security blanket is thick.

Dozens of policemen, many armed with M-16 automatic

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Lendl undergoes knee surgery

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tennis star Ivan Lendl underwent arthroscopic surgery in Los Angeles to remove torn cartilage in his left knee, his agent announced. The native of Czechoslovakia who lives in Greenwich, Connecticut, suffered the injury in a second-round match at the International Players Championships in Key Biscayne, Florida, last week. The surgery was performed Wednesday. Solomon said Lendl will miss next week's Panewebber Classic in Orlando, Florida, and probably miss the Volvo Tennis-Chicago Tournament and the WCT finals in Dallas before returning to action.

Brazil to play 4 friendlies in Europe

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil will play four friendly matches in Europe in May as part of the preparations for this year's South American Championship, scheduled for Argentina in June, the Brazilian Football Association (CBF) said. It said the Brazilians will play their first match against England at London's Wembley Stadium on May 19. The other matches will be against Ireland on May 23 in Dublin, May 26 in Glasgow against Scotland and May 28 in Helsinki, against Finland. Two other friendly matches are pending confirmation, on May 16 in Miami, against the United States, and on June 1, either in Copenhagen, against Denmark, or in Tel Aviv, against Israel, the report said.

Chinese body building contest to be held

BEIJING (AP) — The fifth Hercules Cup national bodybuilding contest will be held next fall in Tongling City in eastern China, it was reported Friday. Zeng Weigui, director of the Body Building Sport Committee under the Chinese Weight-Lifting Association, said the sport had won the support of the general public in China, according to a report in the China News Service. Women bodybuilders at the fourth Hercules Cup national bodybuilding contest, held in the southern city of Shenzhen last year, caused a furor when they wore bikinis for the first time. The attire was approved by the government so Chinese bodybuilders would conform to international bodybuilding contest rules.

11 fans charged over ferry violence

HARWICH, England (AP) — Eleven soccer fans, arrested on a North Sea ferry last August, are to appear in court accused of fighting, theft and criminal damage, police said. Fighting broke out between West Ham United and Manchester United fans on the Dutch ferry Koninkin Beatrix, which was taking the fans from Harwich to the hook of Holland for pre-season exhibition matches in the Netherlands. The incident was seen here as having a large bearing on this week's decision by UEFA, soccer's governing body in Europe, to keep English clubs out of European competition for at least another year.

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Kremlin assures Soviets 'past mistakes will not be repeated'

MOSCOW (AP) — The Kremlin told Soviet citizens Saturday that most of the work still lies ahead in building the nation into a vital economic power, but assured them "the past mistakes will not be repeated."

The address by the Communist Party Central Committee headed by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev covered the front page of all major national newspapers and opened the hourly newscasts of Radio Moscow.

It was issued in connection with this year's 70th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. An accompanying decree announced that preparation of the anniversary are under way.

The Central Committee's address to the people heralded the accomplishments of socialism, declaring the revolution "the most outstanding event of the 20th century."

"We do not have exploitation of man by man. We do not have

unemployment, we do not have national oppression and we do not have poverty and illiteracy," the lengthy address said.

But it also alluded to "deviations" from the path of development forged by Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin, including "violations of legality and democratic norms, manifestations of voluntarism, dogmatism and inertia."

Since Mr. Gorbachev became the Soviet leader in March 1985, those deviations have been respectively ascribed to past leaders Josef Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev.

"Now reorganisation is a fact of life, but the people may not flatter themselves with what has already been achieved," the

address said. "Only the first steps have been made. Most of the work is still ahead."

"Are there guarantees that the work will get along, that the process of change will not stall, that the past mistakes will not be repeated? Yes. There are. The people are interested in reorganisation," the party leadership stated.

Reorganisation is the term used to describe Mr. Gorbachev's campaign for broad changes in Soviet society that are aimed at accelerating economic growth and improving living standards.

The effort is being met by some resistance, as illustrated in frequent media reports about failure by many industries to meet their output targets or to produce goods that measure up to top quality-control checks that began on the first of the year.

Mr. Gorbachev, in recent speeches, has also referred to

ideological resistance by those who fear his reforms deviate from socialist principles.

The Central Committee address may have been an effort to set out before the people an image of unity within the party leadership. It may also have been intended to dampen speculation among some Soviets that Mr. Gorbachev could face the same fate as Mr. Khrushchev if he tries to change the system too radically.

Mr. Khrushchev was ousted by the Central Committee on Oct. 14, 1964, after a slight cultural "thaw" and failed efforts to improve farm and industrial output.

The address asserted the Kremlin is "demonstrating a realistic and flexible approach to international problems." It said the Kremlin will press for a ban on weapons in space and for the reduction and ultimately the elimination of them on earth.

Argentine general refuses to testify on rights abuses

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies) — An Argentine general has refused to testify on human rights violations during military rule and defended the government's actions during the "dirty war" in which 9,000 people disappeared, court sources said.

Gen. Juan Bautista Sassián told the court in Cordoba, north west of Buenos Aires, that the trials of military officers charged with human rights violations were a continuation of the leftist revolution, they said.

The sources said the court would probably order Gen. Sassián's preventive arrest pending trial on Monday.

Gen. Sassián was called to testify in connection with the death in October 1976 of 13 prisoners held in a jail in Cordoba, where Gen. Sassián was head of the army's Fourth Airborne Infantry Brigade. He later became federal police chief.

Gen. Sassián is accused of sign-

ing transfer orders for the prisoners. The army said they died trying to escape but relatives have charged they were shot by a firing squad.

Argentina was ruled by a military junta from 1976 to 1983. The Argentine supreme court unanimously rejected Friday night a request by the country's highest military tribunal that it be allowed to resume jurisdiction over trials of military officers accused of human rights violations.

The five supreme court justices ruled that request filed by the Supreme Military Council, questioning the competence of civilian courts in trying military men, was "manifestly improper."

The ruling cleared the way for federal courts in several cities, including Buenos Aires, Bahia Blanca, Cordoba and Mendoza, to continue with trials and hearings involving approximately 200 military officers.

Former U.S. presidential counselor to head Intelsat

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dean Burch, a former Republican national chairman, counselor to President Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, was chosen to become director general of Intelsat.

Mr. Burch, 59, was selected over candidates from Brazil, Australia and Finland for the post by the board of directors of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (Intelsat). The appointment is subject to ratification by the Intelsat's assembly of parties next month, the agency announced.

Mr. Burch, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission from 1969 until 1974, will become the chief executive and legal representative of the communications cooperative, which

has 113 member nations. Intelsat owns and operates 16 orbiting satellites which help form a worldwide communications system.

The Comsat Corp., the U.S. signatory to Intelsat, nominated Mr. Burch last month. Comsat Chairman Irving Goldstein, in a statement released by the company, said "Burch has demonstrated a clear understanding of the challenges facing Intelsat and he's an excellent choice to take charge of that organization and lead it through these difficult times."

Mr. Burch, a communications lawyer for 30 years, was chairman of the Republican National Commission from 1969 until 1974, will become the chief executive and legal representative of the communications cooperative, which

6 killed, 1 missing in U.S. Air Force crash

SPOKANE, Washington (R) — A U.S. Air Force KC-135 tanker plane crashed at Fairchild Air Force Base during a training flight, killing at least six people, an air force spokesman said.

Five people on the plane and a serviceman on the ground were killed and another person on the plane was missing, Captain Bob Ballew said.

The plane crashed in an open field behind hangars at the base

west of Spokane, Capt. Ballew said.

The airplane normally operates with a crew of four. Airmen 1st Class Teresa Tracy, a spokeswoman at the base, said she did not know why six were aboard.

Kathleen Binford, who was shopping at the base exchange, said she saw the plane dive to the ground and burst into flames after it had taken off and appeared to be turning.

Poll shows Nakasone's popularity has plummeted

TOKYO (AP) — A newspaper survey published Saturday indicates support for Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone has plummeted to 25 per cent amid increasing criticism of his proposed new sales tax and more defence spending.

The survey by the nationwide daily Asahi Shimbun said the number of people who back Mr. Nakasone, leader of the long-ruling Liberal Democrats, fell from 39 per cent of those surveyed in December to 25 per cent in March.

That was the lowest point since Mr. Nakasone became prime minister in November 1982. The newspaper has conducted 22 public opinion polls since Mr. Nakasone took office.

The newspaper attributed the sharp decline in his popularity to opposition to his proposed tax package and planned increase in

the government's defence spending in the budget for fiscal 1987, beginning in April.

It said that the survey, conducted on Wednesday and Thursday, disclosed that 82 per cent of the 3,000 eligible voters polled opposed the proposed implementation of a 5 per cent sales tax.

Sixty-one per cent were against the increase of the defence budget beyond a long-observed ceiling of 1 per cent of the gross national product, the survey said.

Support for the Liberal Democratic Party slipped 7 per cent during the three-month period to 48 per cent, according to the survey. The major gainer, according to the survey, was the largest opposition party, the Socialist Party, which it said moved up to 24 per cent, the highest in a decade.

Finnish Greens set for major election advances

HELSINKI (R) — Finland's "Greens," benefiting from the political fallout of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the neighbouring Soviet Union, appear set for major advances in weekend parliamentary elections.

The environmentalists hold just two places in the outgoing parliament, but opinion polls say they could gain as many as 10 new seats in the elections, scheduled for Sunday and Monday.

In Moscow Friday, Soviet authorities said people held responsible for the Chernobyl disaster will stand trial soon in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine.

Environmentalist movements have already benefited from the "Chernobyl factor" in elections in West Germany and Austria, and Finnish Greens could find themselves with a cabinet portfolio after the elections.

Juha Penttinen, vice-president of the Centre Party, which belongs to the outgoing centre-left coalition, told Reuters the Greens would be able to negotiate a cabinet seat if their vote increases five-fold, as the polls predict.

U.S. vows to continue fight against organised crime

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. authorities have vowed to continue their fight against organised crime after the unexpected acquittal of a man accused of being one of New York's mafia bosses.

The pledge by U.S. Attorney Andrew Maloney came after John Gotti — who prosecutors said was the head of the Gambino crime family — and six co-defendants were found innocent Friday of conspiracy and racketeering charges.

Mr. Maloney said he was disappointed by the verdict.

"We live in a country of rules and procedures and our criminal justice system and the jury have spoken," he said.

"This verdict in no way affects

our determination to vigorously pursue those who terrorise our community and violate our laws."

The acquittal of Gotti came as a blow to authorities who recently won convictions against four of New York's five crime families in the "Pizza connection" drug smuggling case.

So confident were prosecutors that they would fight the mob that they had sought the conviction of Gotti, chief of federal prosecutor in New York City, predicted the end of the mafia in the United States within 10 years.

He said not only were new laws making it easier to win convictions but sociological changes in the Italian-American community made the mafia less attractive.

CIA reportedly obtained advanced Soviet copter

NEW YORK (AP) — The CIA has obtained at least one of the Soviet Union's most advanced helicopter gunships, enabling the United States to learn ways of countering the aircraft's defences, according to a broadcast report.

At least one of two Mi-24 Hind-D helicopters flown into Pakistan by defectors from the Soviet-supported Afghan army in 1985 was turned over to the CIA, NBC nightly news reported, quoting unidentified Pentagon sources.

The sources said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has figured out how to "outsmart" the defensive system of the Mi-24 by making changes in the Stinger anti-aircraft missile for use against it, NBC reported. As a result, the network said, intelligence specialists report that re-

bels in Afghanistan have been able to shoot down many Mi-24s over the past six months.

A CIA spokeswoman, Sharon Foster, asked about the NBC report, said: "We would not confirm or deny an alleged intelligence activity."

The Mi-24 Hind-D is currently the Soviet Union's most advanced chopper gunship and is referred to by the Pentagon as a "flying tank." It is heavily armed and armoured, capable of speeds approaching 200 mph, and considered a significant threat to ground forces.

According to Jane's All the World's Aircraft, the Mi-24 is a twin-engine helicopter that carries a four-barrel Gatling gun in an undernose turret and various types of rockets and missiles mounted on "wings."

Remains of Filipino rebel execution victims found

DAVAO, Philippines (R) — Villagers dug up skeletons of seven more alleged victims of rebel executions in southern Philippines Saturday and the military said the number of bodies found could rise to 200 from the current toll of 70.

The seven were dug from shallow graves in the foothills of Bukangin, a village on the fringes of the former rebel stronghold of Davao city, Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Calida, district military commander, said.

Col. Calida, accompanying journalists to the site, told Reuters discovery of the seven — two of them women — brought the toll of bodies found in the past two weeks to 70, adding that the seven appeared to have been buried about six months ago.

He said the 70 remains, scattered in eight villages on the city's outskirts, were those of so-called deep penetration agents of the military or civilians suspected by guerrillas of being military informers.

Local Communist leaders said last year they were "cleansing their ranks of military informers."

Amnesty seeks freedom for women in U.S. jail

HARLINGEN, Texas (R) — Amnesty International has begun a worldwide letter-writing campaign to seek the release of a pregnant Texas woman jailed for helping Salvadorans enter the United States illegally, a spokesman for the human rights group has said.

Steve Herrick told reporters Stacey Lynn Merkt, a 31-year-old lay church worker, is the first prisoner in the United States to be adopted by the London-based group since 1979.

Amnesty International said in a statement it believed Merkt had been convicted of breaking U.S.

laws that "directly facilitate the violation of human rights."

A federal jury sentenced Merkt in February 1985 to six months in jail and three months probation for conspiring to transport illegal aliens.

Herrick said Merkt helped Salvadorans migrating to south Texas in the belief they faced torture or death if they returned to their war-torn homeland.

Omer Sewell, district director of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) in Harlingen called the campaign "an insult to the American judicial system."

Chile criticises U.N. Human Rights Commission

SANTIAGO (R) — Chile's military government has dismissed criticism of its human rights record at the annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission as hypocritical and political.

"I believe this result reflects the high degree of political influence in the vote, as well as hypocrisy and injustice," Foreign Minister Jaime Del Valle told reporters Friday.

The 43-nation body, meeting in Geneva, unanimously approved Thursday a Mexican motion saying Chilean authorities were ineffective in preventing mistreat-

ment of civilians.

The motion also said authorities had not properly investigated and prosecuted "those responsible for numerous unresolved cases of murder, abduction, disappearance and torture."

The commission had earlier rejected by a narrow margin a U.S. resolution accusing Cuba of holding up to 15,000 political prisoners.

Mr. Del Valle said Chile would have to reassess its policy of cooperation with the commission in the light of the vote.

Global plan urged to give women more say in politics

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Geraldine Ferraro, Democratic Party candidate for vice president in 1984, called on women leaders from 42 nations to design a "global blueprint" to give women a greater role in politics.

Ms. Ferraro said in a speech at the first Eleanor Roosevelt International Caucus of Women Political Leaders that "more women in government would mean stronger voices on issues that impact greater on women."

She noted that women hold only 5 per cent of the offices in the world's democracies.

"We are here together in San Francisco to design a global blueprint to change that," Ms. Ferraro said. "We are here to define practical ways women can play a greater role in the political life of their countries."

The participants in the three-day gathering include cabinet members from several countries, ambassadors, lawyers and members of national legislatures and parliaments.

Ms. Ferraro, a former member

of the U.S. House of Representatives, said she hoped the conference would spur creation of an office that would allow women political leaders around the world to work together more effectively.

"Hopefully, this will be the beginning of a future for women in policy-making positions," she said.

Philippines President Corason Aquino said in a videotaped message that she found it "consoling and reinforcing to know that there are forums like this caucus and that in the male-dominated fields of government and statesmanship, I am not alone."

Victoria Chitepo, Zimbabwe's minister of natural resources and tourism, said she hoped the conference would provide concrete suggestions for "strategies to assist the effective role of women in politics and government."

She said she was one of only two women among 26 ministers in Zimbabwe's cabinet but regarded that as an achievement for such a young republic.

COLUMNS 7&8

Stolen gold sold back to owners

LONDON (AP) — Jeweler John Palmer melted down gold stolen in Britain's biggest robbery and then sold it back to its unsuspecting original owner, a prosecutor told the opening of Palmer's trial. Palmer, 36, and co-defendant Christopher Weymen, 35, have pleaded not guilty to handling gold bullion in connection with the November 1983 robbery of a security depot at London's Heathrow Airport. Six gunmen escaped in vans laden with more than 3 tons of pure gold, then worth \$39 million. Authorities have recovered only 11 of the 6,800 stolen gold bars. Prosecutor Nicholas Purnell told the central criminal court that Palmer controlled the sale of stolen bullion back onto the legitimate market by melting it down with other precious metals to disguise it. "The very losers were deceived into buying back the gold, believing it was genuine gold for sale on the legitimate market," the prosecutor said.

U.K. opens tunnel to save lives of toads

HAMBLEDEN, England (AP) — On a damp and misty morning in the Thames River Valley, Lord Skelmersdale stood in a muddy field with a toad in his hand to open Britain's first purpose-built toad tunnel. The 10-inch (25-cm) diameter underpass under a busy country road will save the nocturnal creatures from being crushed by traffic. "I'm delighted to open something that is the very first. It's a unique occasion," said Lord Skelmersdale, parliamentary under-secretary of state for the environment. He applauded the Fama and Flora Preservation Society for "getting this project under the ground" outside Hambleden village, 56 kilometres west of London.

Voyager 2 changes course

PASADENA, California (R) — The spacecraft Voyager 2, more than three billion kilometres from Earth and speeding towards the planet Neptune, fired its thruster rockets to avoid a possible collision in space. "Everything seems to have gone well and Voyager 2, which has already flown past Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus, should fly within 5,000 kilometres of Neptune on Aug. 24, 1989," a spokesman for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory said. Instructions were sent to the spacecraft several weeks ago, telling it to fire its hydrazine-fuelled thrusters, small manoeuvring rockets, so it could avoid smashing into any rings of boulders, rocks or pebbles which may be circling Neptune, the spokesman said. The mid-course correction took 70 minutes and increased the speed of Voyager 2 by 32 kph, to 69,690 kph the spokesman said. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory runs the U.S. unmanned space programme for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

2 more teens commit suicide in U.S.

CHICAGO (R) — Two teen-age girls have killed themselves here in an apparent suicide pact similar to one that took the lives of four east coast youngsters two days ago. The deaths have set off an anguished look by Americans at teenage suicides, the second biggest killer of young people in the United States after car crashes. The bodies of Nancy Grannan, 19, and Karen Logan, 17, were found in the Chicago suburb of Alsip. They were in a car with the engine running in the closed garage of Logan's home.

New AIDS blood test reported

ZURICH (R) — A Swedish virologist reported a new AIDS blood test using synthetic antigens that would be much cheaper and more reliable than existing tests. Anders Vahne said the test, developed at Gothenburg University, was so accurate that it would eliminate the need for a second test, usually done to double-check those found to be "AIDS positive" — that is, with AIDS antibodies in their blood. Vahne said the test could be on the market in four to eight months. A small Swiss firm helped to finance it. Trials on 400 infected people and 1,000 "AIDS negative" volunteers had a remarkable 100 per cent accuracy rate, Vahne said.

Morticians charge extra for AIDS victims

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Some morticians in the San Francisco area charge up to \$300 extra to handle the bodies of AIDS victims, the San Francisco Examiner newspaper has reported. In a survey of more than a dozen funeral homes, the paper discovered that many morticians absorb extra costs associated with AIDS victims, but some add fees for equipment used in such cases, including rubber gloves, face masks and scrub suits. Norm Nickens, of the city's Human Rights Commission, called the extra charges outrageous and blamed them on irrational fears about the disease. Dr. George Rutherford, medical director of the San Francisco AIDS Office, said no cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome transmission have occurred due to embalming procedures.

Locusts off the menu in Thailand

BANGKOK (R) — Thai gourmets will have to do without their favourite hors d'oeuvre in coming weeks. Locusts are off the menu nationwide. But the tasty insects would be unwise to relax, as they now face a slow death from sprayed insecticides in a new anti-locust drive to help farmers starting on March 21. Locusts killed by insecticides will be unfit for human consumption, Agriculture Ministry officials warn.

U.K. to mint new 'Britannia' gold coin

LONDON (R) — Britain plans to mint and market a new series of bullion coins, including a one-ounce (28.3-gramme) piece of 24-carat gold to be called the "Britannia," a treasury official has said. The new investment coins, to be sold worldwide from next autumn, will fluctuate in price according to the international price of gold. The smaller coins will be in denominations of a half ounce, a quarter ounce and a tenth of an ounce. Britain's only other gold coin at present, called the sovereign and weighing 0.2354 ounces, has been minted since 1817. It is now sold for investment purposes. The Britannia will feature a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II on one side and on the other the figure of Britannia, a seated female figure seen as the personification of Britain holding a trident and the national shield.

Sex hormones linked to high blood pressure

NEW ORLEANS (R) — Scientists have found that young men and women with high sex hormone levels are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure as they grow older. People with relatively high levels of sex hormones — testosterone in men and progesterone in women — will probably suffer from high blood pressure as they age, according to the study by a team of researchers at Louisiana State University Medical School. Larry Webber, a member of the research team, said scientists do not yet understand why correlation exists.

Marines banned from red-light district

GENOA, Italy (R) — U.S. Marines on a visit to Italy's northern port of Genoa have been banned from the bars and nightclubs of the red-light district, a Sixth Fleet spokesman said. He told Reuters that part of the city had been declared off-limits to Marines from the USS Spartanburg County and USS Newport at the suggestion of Genoa police. Both the spokesman and the police declined to give reasons for the ban, setting off a flurry of speculation by bar and nightclub owners who linked it to everything from fears of AIDS to anti-terrorism measures.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN

AND OMAR SHARIF

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ANSWER TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠♠64 ♠A10632 ♠A10632

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass

2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass

What do you bid now?

A—With your distribution, no trump doesn't look appealing as a resting place. Therefore, you should simply continue to describe your hand, and three clubs serves the purpose nicely. Three spades is worth considering, but you don't really want to support a suit that partner has not rebid with only three low cards.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠AKJ3 ♠7 ♠A1082 ♠K98

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?

A—Back in the Old Country they dispensed good advice: When the opponents bid your best suit, pass. You can't double or bid no trump with your singleton heart, and to overcall with two of a minor on a weak four-card suit asks for trouble.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠8 ♠K76 ♠AKQ763 ♠K8

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?

A—If you have a gambling disposition, you might try three no trump, but we would prefer that you held a seventh diamond, or the jack as well, for such action. Our choice would be to double, intending to remove any bid partner might make to no trump at the same level. That invites him to go on to game if he has a smattering of values.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠J1097652 ♠83 ♠Q76

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South

1 NT Double ?

What action do you take?

A—Strange as it might seem, we suggest you bid three no trump! Your hand rates to produce seven tricks, and you hope partner can come up with two more before the opponents get five. Then isn't redouble better? Yes, if you are going to play there. But the odds are that the opponents have some contract, probably in a major, and perhaps even a profitable sacrifice against three no trump. Your bid makes it more difficult for them to locate their best spot.